三香見サカ
Saka Mikami
薫る花は凛と咲く
Kaoruhanawa rintosaku
14
SHONEN MAGAZINE COMICS

Chapter 102: Kaoruko's Present

I WAS JUST KINDA...

RELIEVED THAT THEY WERE BACK.

...

I WAS GLAD...

...

...KNOWING THAT...

YOU DIDN'T STOP DOING SOMETHING YOU LIKED.

...

I DON'T WANT THAT...!

...I WAS ACTUALLY PRETTY WORRIED AND UNSURE IF I SHOULD GIVE YOU SOME MYSELF.

AND SINCE I FIGURED YOU MUST BE ATTACHED TO THOSE EARRINGS IN PARTICULAR...

I'M SO GLAD...

...YOU LIKE THEM...!

SNIFF

GRP

YOU KNOW...

...

BUT NOW, I DON'T RELY ON THEM ANYMORE.

THESE WERE THINGS I LIKED. THINGS I WANTED TO DO...

DYING MY HAIR AND WEARING EARRINGS...

...I WOULD'VE BEEN FINE WITH NOT WEARING EARRINGS ANYMORE.

AND TO BE HONEST...

PLUS, TAKING THEM OFF ISN'T MUCH OF A HASSLE TO BEGIN WITH.

...

WHEN IT'S IN FRONT OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW ME, I FIGURED IT'D BE FINE TO KEEP WEARING THEM.

BUT WHEN IT'S WITH YOU OR THE BOYS...

THEY'RE ALREADY LIKE A TREASURE OF MINE.

...THEN HONEST-LY...

GAVE IT THAT MUCH THOUGHT WHEN CHOOSING A PRESENT...

AND IF YOU...

THEY MADE YOU FEEL AT PEACE. I'M GLAD I KEPT THEM.

KNOWING THAT...

SNAP

SNAP

AND ALTHOUGH YOU MADE IT CLEAR THAT YOU ACCEPTED THEM...

I'VE BEEN WEARING THEM BECAUSE I WANT TO...

EVER MAKE THAT KIND OF FACE AGAIN.

I JUST DIDN'T WANT YOU TO...

I DON'T WANT THAT...!

HOW DO I LOOK?

NO MATTER WHO IT MAY BE...

...YOU ONLY SHOW KINDNESS.

AND YET YOU LET ME KNOW THAT I AM SPECIAL TO YOU.

WHY...

...!

WONK

OUCH!

RUB

RUB

YOU'RE NO FAIR, RINTARO-KUN!

WHY ARE YOU...

GOSH!

HUH?

DO YOU EVEN NEED TO ASK?

...

...THAT MAKE ME FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU MORE AND MORE.

IT'S LINES LIKE THESE...

WAP

THEY LOOK PERFECT ON YOU!

THANKS!

Oh, right!

DO YOU HAVE PLANS AFTER THIS?

NOPE, I'M FREE.

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE GRAB A BITE TO EAT? ONLY IF YOU'RE FEELING OKAY, THOUGH...

I'M FINE. THOUGH... AREN'T YOU SLEEPY?

OH, ALL THE SLEEPINESS GOT BLOWN AWAY ALREADY!

Ha ha ha!

WHERE'D YOU GO, NEE-CHAN?

OH, JUST FOR A WALK.

KCHAK

!

I'M BACK.

Good, Yeah.

How was lunch?

WELCOME BACK, KAORUKO.

SOMEONE'S REALLY HAPPY, HM?

TAM

TAM

...

POMF

GRIP

...

I WAS AWAKE ALL NIGHT...

SAME HERE

NEITHER DID I

I LOVE THEM THANKS A LOT!

I SEE

...!

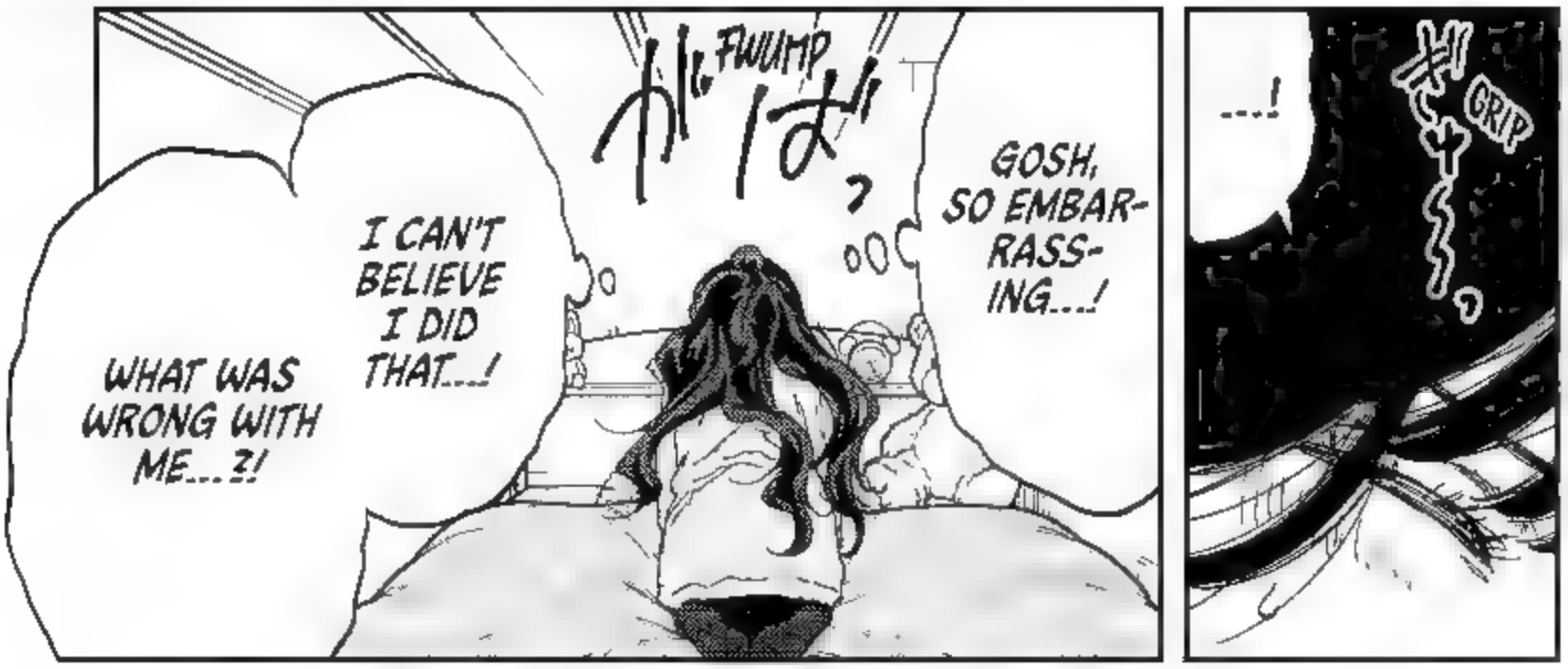
...I COULDN'T GET A WINK OF SLEEP.

LAST NIGHT...

...WOULD REPLAY IN MY HEAD.

..THAT SCENE...

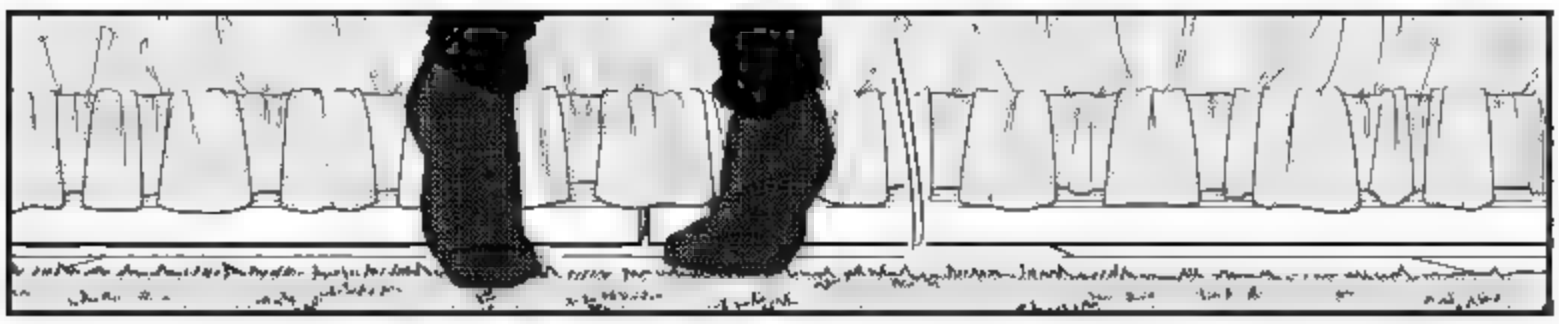
AS SOON AS I WOULD JUST CLOSE MY EYES...


FWUMP
I CAN'T BELIEVE I DID THAT...!
WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ME...?!
GOSH, SO EMBAR-RASS-ING...!
...!
GRIP

WAA
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?! IT'S TOO HARD TO KEEP MY FEELINGS FOR HIM UNDER CONTROL!
BUT... BUT... BUT...
あA

HE MUST HAVE FELT THE SAME WAY, RIGHT...?

NOT TO MENTION...



...IT FELT SO FULFILLING...

WHEN I REALIZED THAT WE BOTH SHARED THE SAME FEELINGS...

...THESE FEELINGS.

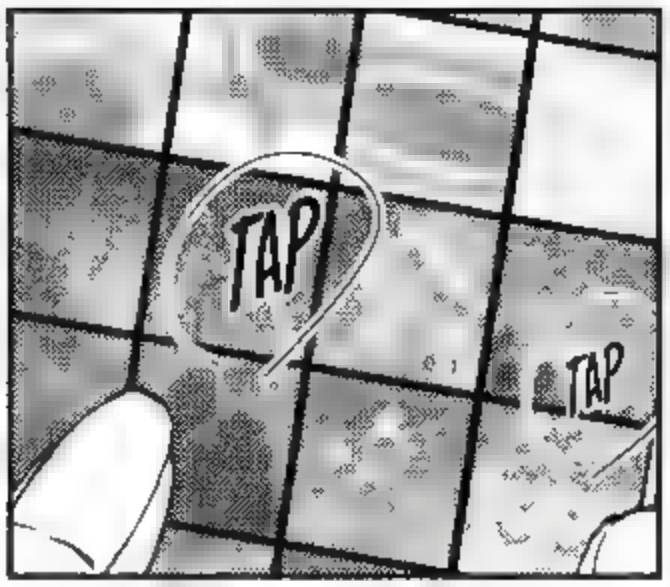
...YOU, WHO GAVE ME...

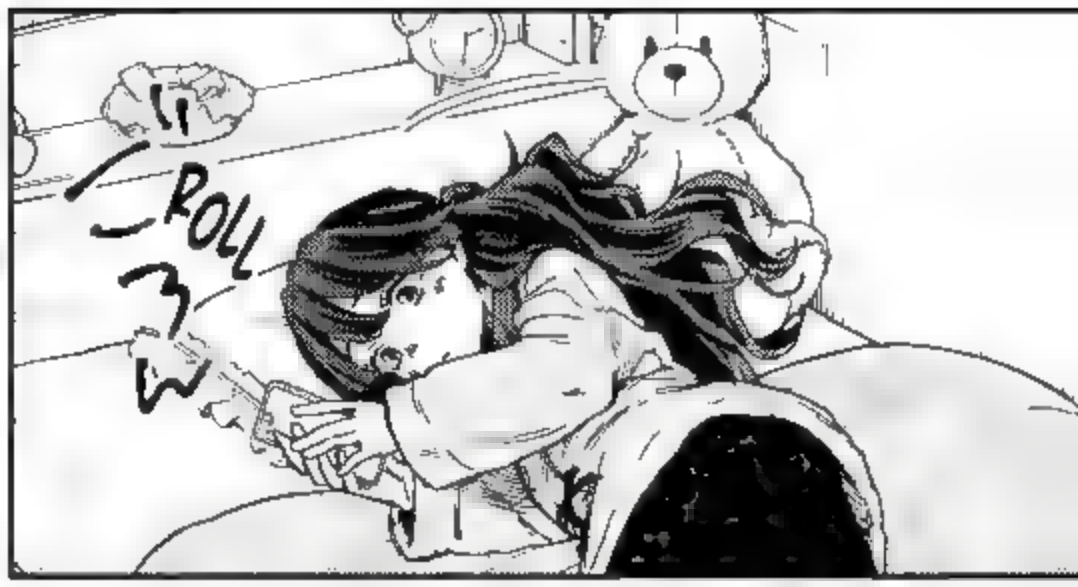
FOR NOW AND EVER...

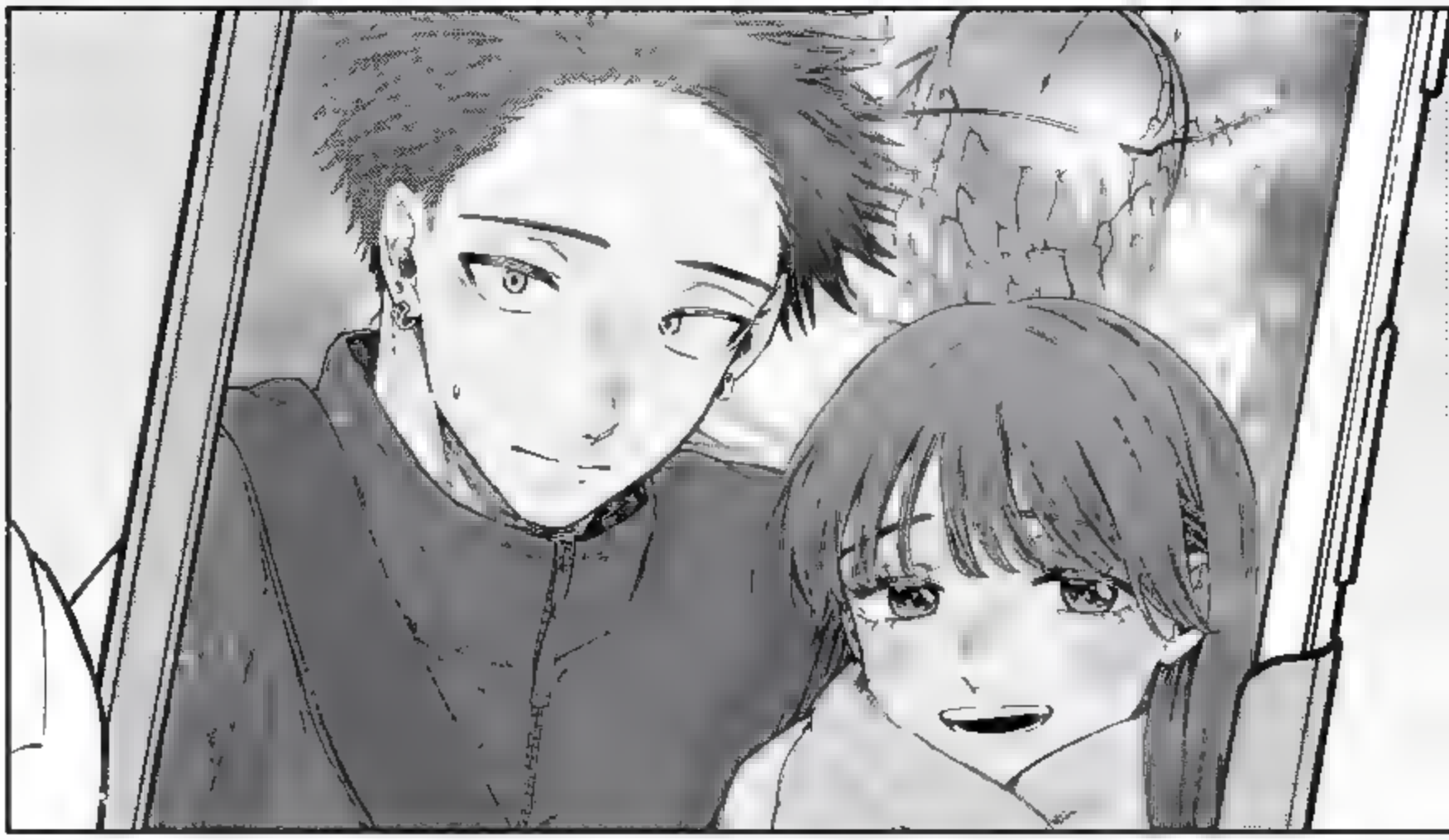
...I WANT TO TREASURE...

HEE HEE.

I CAN'T STOP GRINNING, GEEZ...


TAP
TAP


ROLL



...
MY... TREA- SURE...
DROWSY

IT WAS... SO MUCH FUN...

HONEY?
DINNER IS READY, SO COULD YOU CALL KAORUKO?
YEAH, OF COURSE.
KAO-RUKO?
SILENCE
...?
KAO-RUKO? I'M COMING IN.
...
COULD YOU PUT KAORUKO'S SHARE IN THE FRIDGE FOR LATER?
Food!
Food!
OH DEAR...
WAS SHE SLEEPING AFTER ALL?
YEAH.
THEN WE SHOULD LET HER SLEEP UNTIL SHE WAKES UP.
SOUNDS GOOD.

IT SEEMED LIKE SHE WAS HAVING A PLEASANT DREAM, AFTER ALL.

HE'S BEEN WORKING NON-STOP LATELY, AFTER ALL...

SOUND ASLEEP, HUH?

SEEING HIM LIKE THIS IS JUST SO... RELAXING, RIGHT?

I TOTALLY GET IT...

zzz

zzz

BUT DINNER IS READY, SO IT'S TIME TO EAT.

YOU'RE SO HEARTLESS!

YOUR FATHER IS SLEEPING?! THEN HURRY AND WAKE HIM UP!

...DECEMBER 31ST.

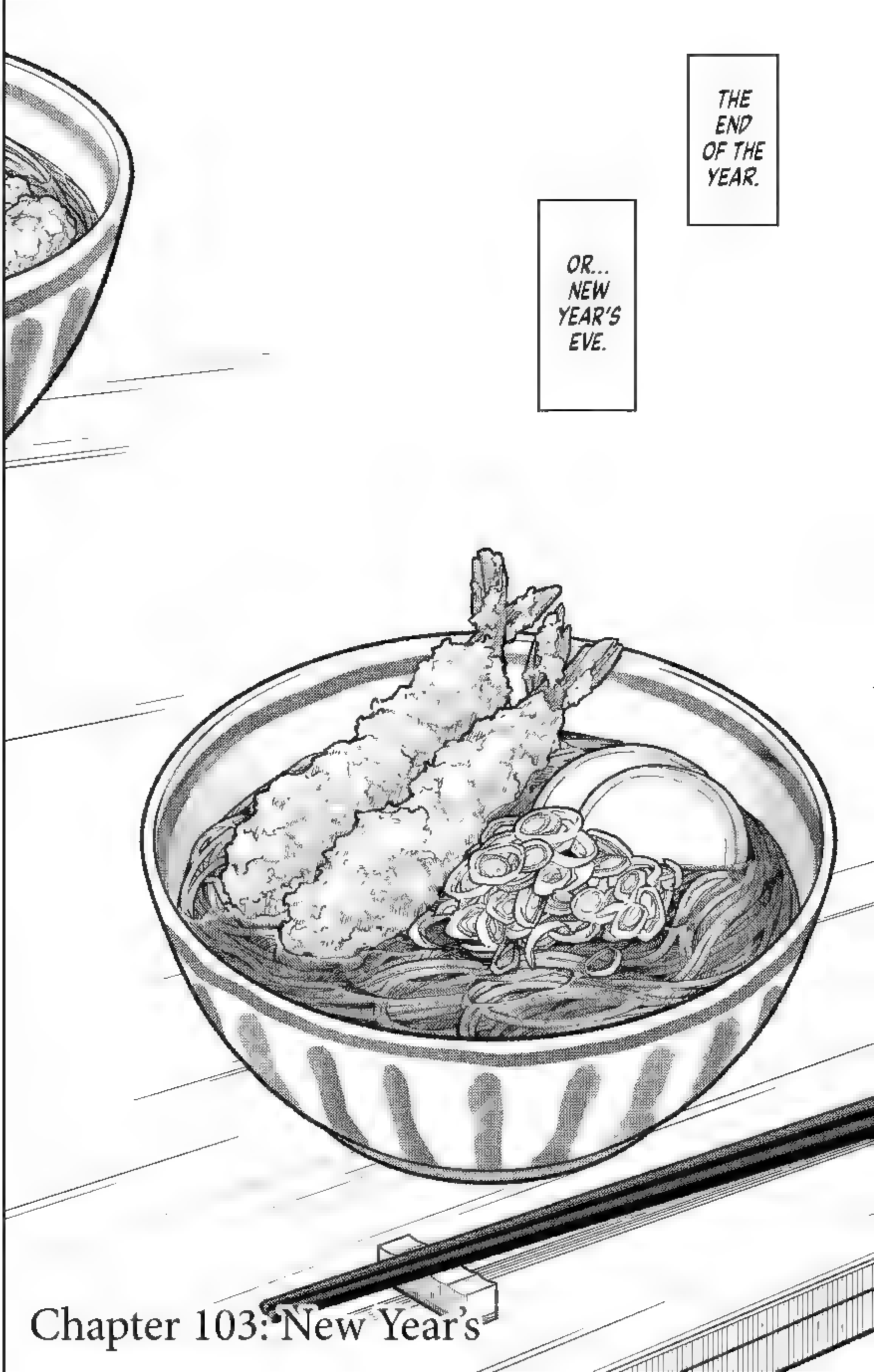
Dad, dinner.

Hngh...

Help me carry it over.

Looks delish!

TODAY IS...



Chapter 103: New Year's

OH, IT STARTED ALREADY!

HE'S EVEN WORKING AS AN ACTOR!

YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW THE GUY, MOM?

I DON'T REALLY WATCH ANY OF THOSE TV DRAMA SHOWS.

So what?

I HEAR THIS SONG A LOT LATELY...

AND THAT BOY'S PRETTY HANDSOME, NO LESS.

YEAH, SHE DID MENTION TO ME AS WELL.

I love these guys the most!

?

SO THESE ARE THE GUYS SHE KEEPS FAWN NG OVER?!

What?!

I BET SHE'S WATCHING THIS SHOW WHILE BAWLING HER EYES OUT RIGHT NOW.

IF IT'S THE BAND SAITO SAID SHE WENT TO WATCH LIVE, THEN YEAH.

DO YOU KNOW, DAD?

PRAISE ME SOME MORE WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!

Wa ha ha!

YET AGAIN, I MUST SHOW NOTHING BUT GRATEFUL-NESS FOR THE EXIS-TENCE OF MY PARENTS...

Thank you very much!

POW

HAVING FOOD ON THE TABLE, MY LAUNDRY IS DONE WITHOUT ME EVEN REALIZING IT, TOO...

ALSO CAN I JUST SAY... FAMILY IS THE BEST THING EVER!

HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA STAY?
GOTTA GET BACK ON THE 3RD. I DO HAVE WORK ON THE 4TH, SEE.
YOUR SCHEDULE IS AS PACKED AS ALWAYS, HUH?
YEAP!
HOW HAVE THINGS BEEN SINCE LAST TIME?
WITH YOUR JOB, I MEAN.
OH, LET ME TELL YOU...
I'M HAVING A TOTAL BLAST!
V!
...THAT'S GOOD.

I'VE... GOT PLANS, TOO.

I'M GONNA HANG OUT WITH HARUKI AND THE OTHERS. I'LL PROBABLY BE BACK LATE, TOO.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR TOMORROW?

ARE YOU GOING ANY-WHERE?

...WHAT IF IT WAS?

NUDGE

GOTTA BE KAO-RUKO-CHAN, RIGHT? *RIGHT?*

GOING OUT, HM? WHO IS IT? C'MON, TELL ME.

DON'T PUT THE BLAME ON ME FOR THAT!

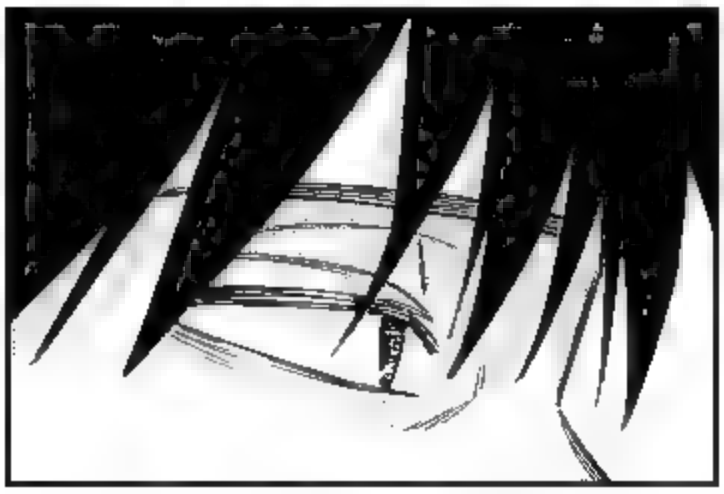
WAA

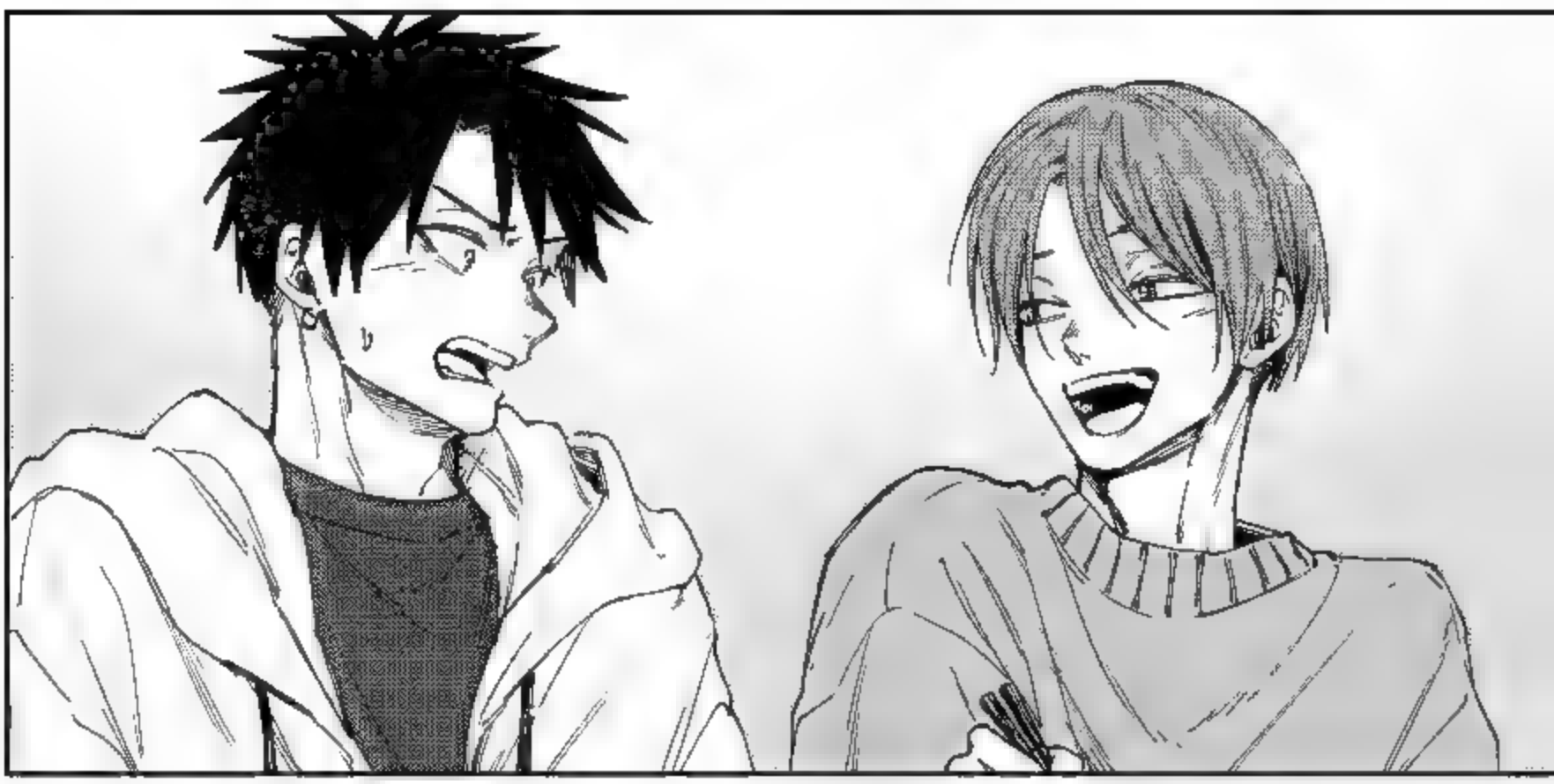
AND I DIDN'T EVEN VOLUNTARILY SHOW YOU THAT PICTURE!

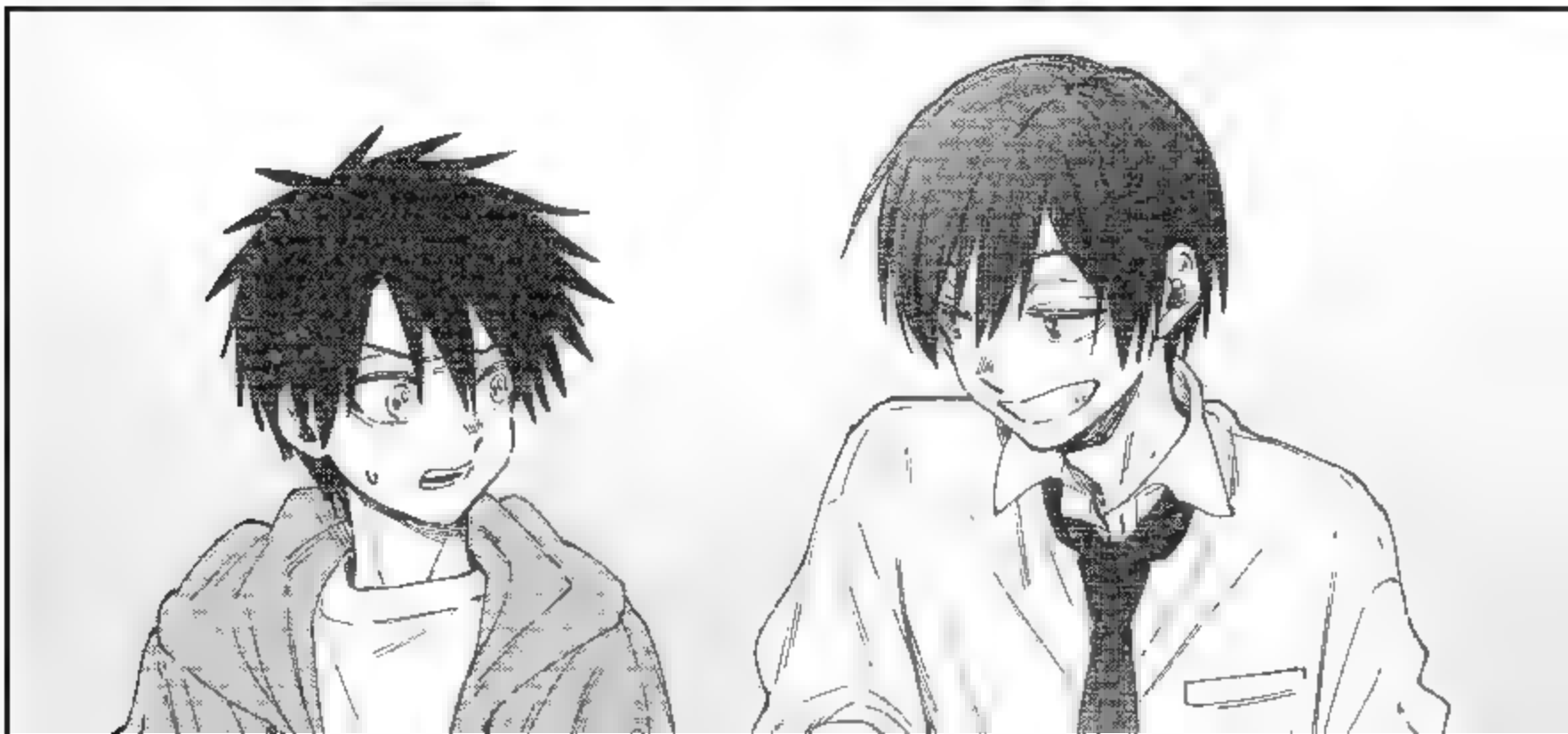
WAA

WHEN ARE YOU GONNA BRING HER OVER SO I CAN MEET HER? YOU'VE ONLY SHOWN ME ONE SINGLE PICTURE SO FAR!

...







...ABSO-LUTELY.

THEY NEVER CHANGE, DO THEY?

AYE-AYE, SIR!

STOP FIGHTING AND GET BACK TO EATING!

AND NOW THE TWO OF THEM ARE SOUND ASLEEP, TOO.

2:54

HM... NAH, JUST LET THEM BE.

SHOULD I WAKE THEM UP?

Trying so hard to stay up...

IF THEY WANTED TO SLEEP, THEY COULD JUST USE THEIR OWN BEDS...

ZZZ

HOW WAS IT?

THIS YEAR, I MEAN.

...

HEY, RINTA-RO?

YEAH?

...

THIS YEAR...

HONESTLY, SO MUCH STUFF HAP-PENED...

I HAD...

I DON'T WANT TO GET USED TO FAILURE

WELL...

TOGETHER, OF COURSE.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.

I WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOU BECAUSE YOU'RE RINTARO-KUN.

GO OUT WITH ME.

GO PLEASE!

SO LET ME SAY IT.

I LOVE YOU, TOO.

RINTARO-KUN.

SO MUCH FUN TODAY!

WHO GAVE ME THAT FEELING.

BUT...

I THINK IT WAS A GREAT YEAR.

...YOU FEEL THAT WAY.

Starting the count-down now!

I THINK IT'S GREAT...

...I SEE.

15

16

FOR ME...

IT WAS A WONDER-FUL YEAR.

DOING JUST FINE.

...GOT THROUGH IT WITHOUT FALLING SICK OR GETTING INJURED...

OUR FAMILY...

8

THANK YOU.

FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE

...I'M OKAY NOW!

...EVEN BETTER.

THAT'S AT I'M ...Y HAPPY ABOUT.

RATHER THAN NOT PUNISHING ANY OF YOUR ENEMIES.

...WHO SEES HIM FOR THE KIND CHILD HE IS.

I WISH THAT THERE WILL BE SOMEONE...

...THANK YOU.

3

5

1

2

...THAT IT ALMOST MAKES ME FEEL A BIT LONELY.

HE'S SHOWN SO MUCH GROWTH IN THIS ONE YEAR...

OH, GUESS IT STARTED.

woo

woo

Happy New Year!

HAPPY NEW YEAR.

HERE'S TO ANOTHER HOPEFULLY GREAT YEAR...

RINTARO.

HOPE-FULLY.

...YEAH.

WUEH?!
WAIT!
OH CRAP, I SLEPT THROUGH THE NEW YEAR?!
FWUMP
Oh!
HAPPY NEW YEAR, YOU TWO!
Wish you a great one, guys!
SO NONCHALANT...
Sign: New Year's Greetings
謹賀
迎春
ぺこー
BOW
A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU.

...OKAY, RINTARO-KUN?

LET'S HAVE ANOTHER GREAT YEAR...

YEAH, LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT'VE BEEN ASLEEP, SO I WAITED UNTIL THE MORNING TO TEXT YOU.

YEAH, CAN'T REALLY SLEEP IN THE LIVING ROOM WITH EVERY-ONE...

I BET YOU WERE AWAKE THROUGHOUT ALL OF IT, RIGHT?

I ACTUALLY FELL ASLEEP RIGHT BEFORE THE NEW YEAR...

I GOT FLOODED WITH MESSAGES WHEN I WOKE UP!

But, I slept like a baby.

Shohei: Happy new year guys.

Natsusawa: Happy new year

Happy new year, everyone.

Ayano Yorita: Looking forward to another year!

Madoka: Happy new year, everyone! I think all of my other friends are sleeping, they aren't responding at all!

Shohei: Seems that way with Hoshina-[illegible] and Waguri-san, too.

WELL, THE GROUP CHAT WAS AS ALIVE AS NEVER, SO I GUESS I DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT...

I'M GONNA PRAY THAT I GET TO EAT TONS OF CAKES THIS YEAR, TOO!

Just kidding!

WELL ...

I-I WAS JUST JOKING! DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!

SOUNDS LIKE YOU.

YUP! DID YOU ALREADY DECIDE ON WHAT YOU WANNA WISH FOR?

That went by faster than I thought

WE'RE ALMOST UP, HUH?

NOT YET... WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I CAN'T EVEN RECOUNT ALL THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED.

YEAH, A LOT HAPPENED THIS YEAR.

BUT...

KINK WAS A GREAT YEAR.

HONESTLY SO MUCH STUFF HAP-PENED

WELL

I SPENT A WHOLE BUNCH OF TIME WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

I FEEL LIKE...

...I'M GETTING USED TO THIS KIND OF ENVIRONMENT AT THIS POINT...

MAYBE...

...WHOM I LOOK FORWARD TO SPENDING MORE TIME TOGETHER WITH IN THE NEW YEAR...

BUT I HAVE PEOPLE AROUND ME...

...FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.

...FEELING GRATE-FUL...

I CAN'T HELP...

...THANKS TO THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED ME FORM THEM.

I'VE MADE SO MANY CONNECTIONS...

I WISH THAT...

AND I WANT TO TREASURE ALL OF THEM.

...WITH KAORUKO-SAN AND THE OTHERS.

...I CAN SPEND... ANOTHER JOYFUL YEAR...

NOW I'M HUNGRY!

OH BOY!

I'm so hungry!

I'M GLAD SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.

Sure.

EXCITED

EXCITED

THERE ARE SO MANY STALLS TO CHOOSE FROM!

LET'S GRAB A BITE TO EAT, RINTARO-KUN!

OH GOSH, YOU SAW RIGHT THROUGH ME...

YOU WERE STARING AT THE STALL THE WHOLE TIME WE WERE LINING UP.

HOW DID YOU KNOW?!

I BET YOU'VE SET YOUR EYES ON THE FRIED CHICKEN, RIGHT?

OF COURSE?
TURN
I CAN ALWAYS TELL JUST WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
PAWOW
ANYWAY, LET'S GO GRAB A BITE.
I...
Scary...!
STOMP
He's huge!
I ALREADY LOVE HIM SO MUCH IN THE NEW YEAR...!
BOMP
...

SEVEN
PIECES,
PLEASE!

GUESS WE WENT TO THE SAME SHRINE FOR OUR FIRST VISIT, EH?

YOU SURE DO STAND OUT, MAN. I SPOTTED YOU IMMEDI-ATELY.

...?

!!!

AND I GUESS YOU MUST BE KAORUKO-CHAN THEN, RIGHT?

H-HEY...!

UM... Y-YES, THAT'S RIGHT...?

HEARD YOU WERE LOOKING AFTER MY LITTLE BROTHER.

NICE TO MEET YOU!

...!!

YOU ARE... RINTARO-KUN'S BROTHER?!

It's all over !!

Chapter 113: Sutaro and Kaoruko

THE NAME'S SOTARO!

Nice to meet ya.

YOU ARE... RINTARO-KUN'S OLDER BROTHER?!

WHY THE HELL ARE YOU HERE?!

I WAS WITH THEM JUST A MOMENT AGO, BUT I SPOTTED YOU IN THE DISTANCE.

AND WHERE DID YOU LEAVE YOUR FRIENDS?! YOU SAID YOU'D BE MEETING UP WITH THEM, RIGHT?!

WHAT THE...

SO THE CHOICE OF NOT RUNNING OVER TO US NEVER EXISTED IN THE FIRST PLACE, HUH?

Aye, catch you later!

He's still as crazy over his brother, hun?

I spotted my younger bro so I'll go check up on him!

AND SO, I HAD THEM GO AHEAD WITHOUT ME. I JUST NEEDED TO TALK WITH KAORUKO-CHAN FOR A BIT!

OH, NO NEED TO BE SO STIFF. I HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU FROM RINTARO ALREADY.

BOW

BOW

MY NAME IS KAORUKO WAGURI, AND...I'M RINTARO-KUN'S GIRLFRIEND!

!

UM... IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU!

CRAP, I JUST LOST MY CHANCE TO CHASE HIM AWAY...!

They're hitting it off?

Sorry to suddenly show up out of nowhere like this.

I'VE BEEN DYING TO MEET YOU FOR SO LONG, LET ME TELL YOU.

D-DON'T BE! I'M GLAD THAT I COULD MEET YOU IN PERSON!

JUST LET ME MAKE UP FOR IT...

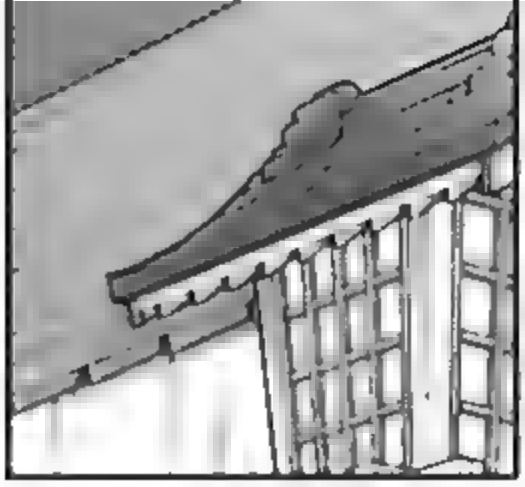
I DID GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR DATE, REMEMBER?

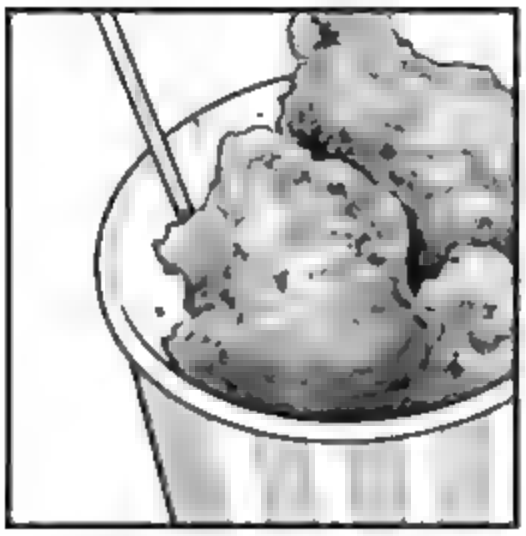
I'M NOT TAKING NO FOR AN ANSWER!

N-NO, YOU DON'T HAVE TO...

I'LL GO BUY US SOME FOOD.

ALSO, HOW MANY PIECES DO YOU WANT NOW?





L3, TURN
...AND CONSIDER IT HITTING THE JACK-POT FOR TODAY!

もぐ MUNCH
もぐ MUNCH

OH MY...

...

NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU KEPT WORKING SO HARD ON ALL THOSE CAKES...

It's a joy to watch her like that

CHATTER

CAN'T HE JUST LEAVE ALREADY?

IT TASTES THE BEST WHEN IT'S FRESHLY FRIED, DOESN'T IT?

THE FRIED CHICKEN HERE IS SO GOOD!

!!

ROLL

3

BUMP

OH NO...

PHEW, JUST BARELY GOT IT...

BAP

...

FRIED CHICKEN DRENCHED IN SAUCE.

STICKY

UM... NICE CATCH...?

I GUESS...

BUT THEN...

ERK...

YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GO AND WASH YOUR HANDS.

Just be more careful from now on, yeah?

We're very sorry!

I SECOND THAT.

HE'LL BE ALONE WITH HER...

...WHILE I'M NOT AROUND.

I BET YOU'RE JUST GONNA TELL HER WEIRD STUFF...

HM?

STARE

I'm not gonna be that kind of guy.

Don't worry.

ピンポーン
DING

Oh...

...

...

I THINK HE'S WORRIED!

ABOUT WHAT...?

and get back!

Gotta hurry

HE SEEMED RELUCTANT UNTIL THE VERY END...

SO ANYWAY, I'VE GOT SOME STORIES ABOUT HIM YOU'D LOVE TO HEAR!

THAT I MIGHT EMBARRASS HIM WHILE HE'S NOT AROUND!

BAM

Sorry.

WELL, I DON'T WANT HIM TO HATE ME FOREVER, SO THEY'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR ANOTHER TIME.

I UNDER-STAND...

BDMP

STORIES ABOUT RINTARO...?!

NO, NEVER...

HAVE YOU SERIOUSLY NEVER SEEN RINTARO ANGRY BEFORE?

YOU'RE TOTALLY ON BOARD?!

Say what?!

I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO SEE HIM ANGRY FOR ONCE...

THOUGH, THAT'S A SHAME...

SO JUST SEEING HIM A BIT HEATED AND FRUSTRATED FEELS... REFRESHING, I GUESS?

HE'S ALWAYS KIND AND COMPOSED...

IT MAKES ME...

ALL GLEEFUL.

HE'S CALLING ME BY MY LAST NAME IN FRONT OF HIS MOTHER HE MUST STILL BE A BIT EMBARRASSED.

MMM

D-DON'T PUT KA, WAGURI-SAN IN AN AWKWARD SPOT!

C'MON JUST A BIT, OKAY?

CAN YOU STOP WITH THAT ALREADY?!

THIS FEELS NEW.

MAYBE BECAUSE... IT MEANS HE'S OPENED UP TO THE PERSON...

ARE YOU... JEALOUS OF ME BY ANY CHANCE?

I GUESS I MADE IT TOO OBVIOUS. HAHA.

...

HEY, KAORUKO-CHAN...

YES?

THANKS A LOT.

UM...?

I JUST WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR THE LONGEST TIME.

A WHILE BACK, I ACTUALLY VISITED RINTARO AND OUR PARENTS.

AND LET ME TELL YOU, RINTARO HAD CHANGED A WHOLE LOT.

EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM SEEMED A LOT MORE... CALM AND PEACEFUL.

THAT HE'S SOFTENED UP QUITE A BIT

I COULD CLEARLY TELL

HUH?! BUT WAIT FOR ME

DESPITE ALL YOUR ATTACHMENT?

I'M FINE NOW OKAY?

NOT TO FORGET HIS HAIR COLOR!

NEVER DID I THINK I'D SEE THE DAY HE SAID GOODBYE TO HIS BLOND HAIR!

...HE'S STARTED SMILING A LOT MORE.

AND I THINK...

...RIGHT.

Y-YES...

DO YOU KNOW... WHAT WAS GOING ON WHEN HE WAS STILL IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL?

THAT'S... AMAZING.

SO HE'S TOLD YOU EVERY-THING.

THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO THANK YOU AT LEAST ONCE!

WELL, THE REASON HE'S CHANGED SO MUCH MUST BE BECAUSE OF HIS FRIENDS...

AND YOU ESPECIALLY, KAORUKO-CHAN.

...WAS DRAG HIM AROUND SO THAT HE'D GET HIS MIND OFF THINGS.

THE BEST I COULD DO...

...I DIDN'T REALLY HELP HIM ALL THAT MUCH.

IT JUST MAKES ME THINK...

...

NO NO

ERR DID I SAY SOMETHING

!

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT YOU TWO REALLY ARE ALIKE.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT, ACTUALLY.

I JUST KEEP RUNNING MY MOUTH ABOUT EVERYTHING, AND UNLIKE HIM, I'M NOT NEARLY AS DILIGENT AND SERIOUS. WE'RE POLAR OPPOSITES, IF ANYTHING...

BUT... WE CLEARLY AREN'T?!

HUH?!

TH-THANKS, BUT... HOW DID YOU KNOW?

Happy late birthday.

...OH, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT. DECEMBER 26TH WAS YOUR BIRTHDAY, YES?

...HUH?

AND THERE, HE TOLD ME ABOUT YOU

ACTUALLY, I ATE LUNCH WITH RINTARO-KUN ON THE 26TH

AND NOT ONLY THAT. EVEN PLAYING GAMES TOGETHER OR WATCHING MOVIES

BACK IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HE'D OFTEN INVITE ME TO PLAY CATCH.

HE WAS PROBABLY JUST TRYING TO LOOK AFTER ME SINCE I'D ALWAYS BE ALONE

WELL THINKING BACK ON IT

YOU MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY CLOSE

...MADE ME REALLY HAPPY.

JUST SPENDING TIME WITH SOMEONE ELSE...

BEING INVITED TO DO SOME-THING WITH HIM...

BUT BACK THEN...

...

RINTARO-KUN DEFINITELY BELONGS TO THAT GROUP...

HE TOLD ME

HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THIS SITUATION.

SAVED BY ME?

YOU WERE.

BUT EVEN SO.

THE I ASKED FOR YOU TO NOT MEET ANYMORE

THE CHOICE OF NOT SEEING YOU ANYMORE DOES NOT EXIST WITHIN HIS OPTIONS, I'M SURE

I'M DRAWING A BLANK HERE

YOU ARE.

I BET YOU DON'T REMEMBER THAT

AM RIGHT?

...BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO DON'T EVEN HESITATE OR DON'T SEE IT AS ANYTHING SPECIAL.

THEY NEVER ONCE CONSIDER THAT WHAT THEY'VE DONE IS ANYTHING WORTH BOASTING ABOUT.

...EVEN THAT SMALL THING COULD MEAN THE WORLD TO THEM.

..SUPPORTED YOU SO IMENSELY.

THAT FACT ALONE...

BUT TO THE PERSON THEY'VE HELPED...

AND YET, AS ALWAYS, HE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT IN THE SLIGHTEST.

THAT IT BEGAN TO HURT.

...I THOUGHT YOU REALLY ARE ALIKE.

AND SINCE NEITHER OF YOU TEND TO MAKE THAT REALIZATION...

YES, YOU DID.

I'M NOT SO SURE MYSELF...

HONESTLY, DID I REALLY DO THAT MUCH FOR HIM?

...YOU DID LESSEN HIS BURDEN.

I THINK...

BECAUSE IF THAT HADN'T BEEN THE CASE...

...SPOKEN OF YOU...

HE WOULDN'T HAVE...

...WITH SUCH GLEAM AND JOY.

...HOPE SO, YEAH.

...

I...

SHE'S REALLY GOT ME GOOD.

MAN...

...JUST BY TALKING TO HER LIKE THIS.

I CAN TELL ALREADY...

...THAT CHANGED RINTARO SO MUCH.

I'M SURE...

IT'S HER ABILITY TO EXPRESS HER FEELINGS SO HONESTLY AND OPENLY...

I'M GLAD...

RINTARO MET THIS GIRL

YOU MUST REALLY LIKE RINTARO, HUH?

!

YOU'VE GOT GREAT TASTE!

RIGHT ON TIME, MY DUDE!

!

YEAH, THANKS ...

OH! WELCOME BACK, RINTARO-KUN!

CRAP, THE REST-ROOMS WERE SO CROWDED ...!

TAM

TAM

THEY'RE... GETTING ALONG JUST FINE...

It's gonna get cold at this rate.

WE WERE JUST PONDERING IF WE SHOULD EAT YOUR SHARE, TOO!

I DIDN'T ENDORSE THAT, JUST SO YOU KNOW!

HE'S A GREAT PERSON.

See ya!

SORRY I INTERRUPTED Y'ALL'S DATE. HAVE FUN FOR THE REST OF IT!

ANYWAY, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO HEAD BACK.

...

THANK YOU FOR TREATING US TO SOME FOOD!

I DID NOT TELL HER A SINGLE THING.

...

STARE

I swear.

SO WHAT DID YOU TWO TALK ABOUT WHILE I WAS GONE?

THEN AGAIN HE S YOUR OLDER BROTHER SO OF COURSE HE WOULD BE

Y-YOU THINK SO...?

OH, WELL...

WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT HOW GREAT YOU ARE!

Chapter 105: A New Year, A New Term

...

YOUR EARRINGS, I MEAN!

LEAN

OH, WHAT DO I SEE? STILL WEARING THEM, HUH?

Mornin'!

HOW MUCH LONGER IS HE GOING TO TEASE ME ABOUT THAT?

KLANK

OH, SHUT IT...

HOW NICE... GETTING A PRESENT FROM YOUR GIRLFRIEND...

HEE HEE

Morning.

And, you don't even keep your voice down.

YOU ALWAYS RUN YOUR MOUTH ABOUT EVERY SMALL THING, I SWEAR...

CAN YOU NOT TALK ABOUT THE GIRLS THAT MUCH WHILE WE'RE AT SCHOOL?

!

BOR-ING!

Hold the phone! Are those new earrings?! Did you get them from Waguri-san by any chance?!

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT, NATSUSAWA.

YOU DIDN'T LET HIM HEAR THE END OF IT WHEN WE MET UP ON NEW YEAR'S.

KNOWING THAT THEY'RE GETTING ALONG AND ALL.

I'M JUST HAPPY FOR HIM, Y'KNOW?

ALSO, WE'VE GOTTA HAND IN OUR CAREER SURVEY DURING THE NEXT HOMEROOM, RIGHT?

YUP, THAT'S TODAY.

OH CRAP! I TOTALLY FORGOT ABOUT THAT!

SO HE SAYS, RINTARO.

Okay okay! I won't bring it up while we're at school

...

Yup, that

Is it this one?!

...

I FEEL LIKE...

I FINALLY FOUND AN ANSWER I'M HAPPY WITH.

I ACTUALLY WANT TO BECOME A POLICE OFFICER.

ERM... KINDA...?

Ha ha ha...

OH, WAIT. IS THIS ABOUT MY CAREER SURVEY?

WHAT'S UP? DO I HAVE SOMETHING ON MY FACE?

!

FLINCH

I FILLED IT OUT ALREADY.

NO WOR-RIES.

SMILE

...ALL RIGHT.

DING-DONG

CLASS IS STARTING, FOLKS!

TSUKA-CHAN! HAPPY NEW YEAR!

YES, YES. HAPPY NEW YEAR, YOU GUYS.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED...

CHATTER

DID WE GET SOME-THING LIKE THAT?

WHAT CAREER SURVEY?

CHATTER

WAIT, I DID AS WELL!

TSUKA-CHAN! I'M SORRY! I FORGOT TO FILL OUT MY CAREER SURVEY!

SLAM

YOU'RE TOO LOUD.

IT'S TIME TO TELL US EVERYTHING, KAORUKO!

JUST WHAT HAP-PENED...

...

...ON CHRIST-MAS?!

WE COULD'VE MET UP ON NEW YEAR'S BUT WE COULDN'T FIND THE TIME

THE FIRST LUNCH BREAK BACK AT SCHOOL AND WE'RE JUMPING RIGHT INTO IT, HUH?

held ba

IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK OF COUPLES ON CHRISTMAS?

WE'RE TALKING CHRISTMAS! NO WAY NOTHING HAPPENED, RIGHT?!

I MIGHT HOW COULD I NOT BE?

YOU ACT ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY, BUT WEREN'T YOU SUPER INTERESTED WHEN YOU FOUND OUT THEY WERE GOING ON A DATE ON CHRISTMAS?

MRK...

SO—

DID YOU KISS?

KLATTER

WAIT, FOR REAL?!

W-WE'RE SORRY...

YOU'RE TOO LOUD... WHY DO YOU THINK WE CAME OVER HERE TO EAT LUNCH?

THEY SURE ARE EXCITED...

NO WAY!

YOU'RE SO BOLD, KAORUKO!

TH-THAT WAS ME...

AND WHO INITIATED IT?!

BUT ANYWAY... FOR REAL?!

WHERE?! WHAT LED UP TO IT?!

OH, WELL ...

HOW'D SHE REACT THOUGH?

THAT MAKES SENSE!

I HEARD ABOUT IT THIS MORNING.

AND WHY ARE YOU SO CALM ABOUT THIS, HOSHINA-SAN?!

SUBARU, SAVE ME...

THAT'S IT?!

OH, REALLY?

...

BLUSH

TRUE!

YES, THAT'S RIGHT...

OH YEAH, YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD TROUBLE WITH MEN, RIGHT?

HONESTLY, I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT THAT STUFF...

LEAN

す...

WERE YOU NOT... I DON'T KNOW... CURIOUS TO KNOW MORE?

ぼや PUFF

...BUT WHEN IT COMES TO LOVE AND ALL THAT, I CAN'T SAY I'M ALL TOO INTERESTED...

ぼや PUFF

IT'S THANKS TO THOSE FOUR...

THAT I COULD SLOWLY OVERCOME THAT FEAR...

TALK ABOUT LOVE AND WHAT ELSE THEY ENJOY, SO...

I DO ENJOY WATCHING PEOPLE...

...?

...

THAT SAID...

NOT AT ALL. TO EACH THEIR OWN, RIGHT?

IS THAT... WEIRD, I WONDER?

EVERY-BODY HAS THEIR OWN PERCEPTION OF WHAT'S NORMAL.

HOLD ON...

HEARING SOME MORE, ACTUALLY.

I WOULDN'T MIND...

SMILE

THEN WHY DON'T WE HAVE HER TELL US SOME MORE!

OH, REALLY NOW...?

GRIN

GRIN

SUBARU! YOU DUMMY!

Out with it!

YOU HAVEN'T ANSWERED ALL OF OUR QUESTIONS YET, KAO-RUKO!

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...

THAT...

IS ALREADY NEXT WEEK, RIGHT?

...!

ALL RIGHT, THEN ONCE AGAIN...

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RINTARO!

TH-THANKS

EITHER WAY, LET'S HAVE A BLAST TODAY!

THEN AGAIN, IT'S STILL ONE WEEK UNTIL YOUR BIRTHDAY, THOUGH!

OH, ZIP IT.

I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE HANGING OUT AT A THEME PARK OF ALL PLACES! AREN'T YOU JUST THE CUTEST, LITTLE RIN BOY!

...

WE'RE GOING TO THE THEME PARK AS TSUMUGI-KUN REQUESTED!

SMILE !!!

SMILE !!!

...IF WE ALL CAME HERE TO-GETHER.

I FIGURED IT'D BE FUN...

WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE HIS MOTHER?

OH DEAR ME, SOMEONE'S A BIT SELF-INDULGENT...

YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, YORITA-KUN.

WAIT, WHAT?

SMIRK

ALL RIGHT! LET'S CHECK OUT ALL THE ATTRACTIONS YOU WANNA RIDE, RIN-CHAN!

DON'T SUD-DENLY LEAP AT ME LIKE THAT!

JUMP

Let's go!

Let's go!

H-HEY, I NEVER SAID THAT...!

AND ALL THE ONES WHERE IT'S A TWO-PEOPLE RIDE, OF COURSE THAT POSITION BELONGS TO YOU, RIGHT?

I'M BETTING MONEY ON THAT SHOHEI'S GONNA BE SOUND ASLEEP ON THE TRAIN RIDE HOME.

I DUNNO ABOUT THAT...

WILL THAT ENERGY KEEP UP FOR THE REST OF THE DAY, I WONDER...

YEAH?

SAY, HOSHINA-SAN?

...

...WHY WAGURI-SAN INVITED THE REST OF US ALONG FOR TODAY?

DO YOU KNOW...

Since they're dating, after all...

I FIGURED THE TWO OF THEM WOULD CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY AMONGST THEM-SELVES...

HUH?

...WHEN SHE SUDDENLY TEXTED ME.

Today

Sorry for the sudden message! I was thinking we could go somewhere to celebrate Rintaro-kun's birthday. Do you have time on the 22nd? 16:45

I'm asking the others right now, too! 16:45

THAT'S WHY I WAS MORE THAN JUST A BIT CONFUSED...

THE THING IS...

WELL... WE'VE GOT SCHOOL ON THE 28TH WHEN HIS BIRTHDAY ACTUALLY IS, SO AT LEAST WE GUYS WOULD BE ABLE TO CELEBRATE IT WITH HIM JUST FINE.

紅が丘駅
Benigaoka Sta.

...CAME UP ON THE WAY HOME FROM HELPING OUT AT HIS FAMILY'S PATISSERIE LAST CHRISTMAS.

THIS WHOLE TALK ABOUT TSUMUGI-KUN'S BIRTH-DAY...

YOU WANNA CELEBRATE IT WITH EVERYONE?!

SAY WHAT?!

YEAH. I WAS THINKING OF ASKING ABOUT EVERYONE'S PLANS AFTER THIS...
...AND SEE IF THERE'S ANY PLACES RINTARO-KUN WOULD LIKE TO GO TO, ASSUMING HE'S FINE WITH MY IDEA.
BUT...WHY? DON'T YOU WANNA CELEBRATE JUST BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU?
I'M STILL GOING TO GO SEE HIM AFTER SCHOOL ON HIS BIRTHDAY AND GIVE HIM HIS PRESENT!
BUT TODAY... WE HAD ALL THAT TALK ABOUT FUTURE AND CAREERS AND ALL THAT, RIGHT?
IT LOOKED TO ME...
...LIKE YOU'D BE DOING JUST FINE EITHER WAY.
WHENEVER YOU HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION.
WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS LATER
THE REST COMES ALONG THE WAY, OR SO I THINK AT LEAST.
IN JUST A LITTLE WHILE, WE'LL BE IN OUR THIRD YEAR...
AND I DON'T THINK WE'LL GET AS MANY CHANCES TO MEET UP LIKE THIS AS BEFORE.
SO... I FIGURED WE MIGHT AS WELL CELEBRATE HIS BIRTHDAY TOGETHER IN A BIG GROUP!
WELL, I DON'T SEE AN ISSUE WITH THAT, BUT...
I JUST THINK WE SHOULD ENJOY THE THINGS...
...WE MIGHT ONLY BE ABLE TO ENJOY RIGHT NOW.
NOT TO MENTION...

WE'RE GOING TO CELEBRATE HIS BIRTH-DAY...
...JUST BET-WEEN THE TWO OF US...
...MANY MORE TIMES IN THE FUTURE. SO IT'S FINE!

...OH, ABSO-LUTELY.

IT'S JUST LIKE HER, DON'T YOU THINK?

...THEN WE GOTTA MAKE THIS A DAY TO REMEMBER!

STRETCH

AND IF THAT'S HER ANGLE...

HURRY, HURRY!

YOU GUYS!

!

NO NEED TO BE SO EMBARRASSED, MY BOY!

OH DEAR ME, LITTLE SAKU!

CAN YOU AT LEAST NOT PICK A CUTESY ONE LIKE THAT?!

YOU CAN'T WALK AROUND A THEME PARK AND *NOT* PUT ON A THEMED HEADBAND!

SOMEONE'S SURPRI-SINGLY HONEST.

AND STILL ANGRY, THOUGH.

I NEVER SAID I WASN'T GONNA WEAR ONE, SO JUST LET IT BE!

!

YOU GUYS! ARE YOU DONE DECIDING?

WELL, THEY'VE GOT PLENTY TO CHOOSE FROM, RIGHT?

MAN, YOU'VE GOT SO MANY DEMANDS. JUST TAKE A JOKE FOR ONCE!

PASS, THANKS

I REALLY THOUGHT IT'D LOOK GOOD ON YOU, THOUGH!

Chapter 106: Touring The Theme Park

BECAUSE HE RESPECTED SAKU-KUN'S WISHES WHILE CHOOSING ONE... UNLIKE A CERTAIN SOMEONE ELSE.

WHY'D HE IMMEDIATELY GO WITH THE ONE RINTARO SUGGESTED? HMPH...

And I guess he couldn't say no any longer

HEY HEY, THAT'S PRETTY GOOD, NATSU-SAWA-KUN!

...WHY THANK YOU.

LOOKS GREAT ON YOU!

CUTE...

IT... IT'S NOT CUTE AT ALL ..

I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D ACTUALLY WEAR ONE...!

BUT SINCE WE'RE HERE ALREADY AND ALL... AND THIS IS THE ONLY TIME YOU CAN REALLY WEAR ONE...

AND TO BE HONEST... WEARING IT IS HELLA EMBARRASS-ING...

!

I THINK THAT HEADBAND LOOKS GREAT ON YOU TOO, RINTARO-KUN!

I BET THIS WOULD LOOK GREAT ON YOU, RINTARO-KUN!

NOT TO MENTION...

HEARING THAT WAS ALL THE REASON...

I NEEDED TO PUT IT ON...

ボソッ MUMBLE

YOU KNOW, THESE ACCESSO-RIES WE'RE WEARING...

THEY'RE FROM THE SAME FAIRYTALE, RIGHT?

OH, YEAH. I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE.

HEARING WHAT?

Did something happen earlier?

NO, IT'S NOTHING. DON'T MIND ME.

THEN I GUESS...

...WE'RE ROCKING ANOTHER PARTNER LOOK, HUH?

AH, RIGHT!

RINTARO! WHAT SHOULD WE CHECK OUT FIRST?

THEY'RE SO ADORBS! ALSO, YOU'RE SURPRISINGLY GOOD AT SNAPPING PHOTOS, SUBARU!

That one turned out great!

MR. WOLF AND RED RIDING HOOD ARE GETTING ALONG QUITE WELL...

HEE HEE

...I'D LIKE TO TRY THAT.

IF YOU GUYS GOT NO OBJEC-TIONS...

YEAH.

If it's just something like that.

YOU DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH IT EITHER, RIGHT SUBARU?

ALL GOOD!

WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?

GOING FULL THROTTLE FROM THE START, HUH? I'M DOWN!

DASH

THEN OFF WE GO!

GRAB

PER-FECT!

HEY! I TOLD YOU NOT TO PULL ME LIKE THAT!

No, you didn't!

JUST A LITTLE WHILE AGO, YOU TOLD ME NOT TO JUMP AT YOU, SO IT'S FINE!

DON'T THEY TAKE A PICTURE RIGHT WHEN YOU'RE ZOOMING DOWN THE PEAK?

LET'S ALL TRY AND LOOK AT THE CAMERA THEN!

YOU KNOW, I WAS THINKING...

THAT'S WHY... HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT CELEBRATING YOUR BIRTH-DAY WITH THE OTHERS?

THERE ARE THINGS WE CAN ONLY EXPERIENCE RIGHT NOW...

SO WE SHOULD TRY TO ENJOY THEM TO THE FULLEST, RIGHT?

SO, BEING ABLE TO MEET UP LIKE THIS...

...HAVING EVERYONE CELEBRATE MY BIRTHDAY...

...AND JUST FOOLING AROUND WITHOUT A WORRY IN THE WORLD...

AROUND THIS TIME NEXT YEAR...

WE'RE PROBABLY ALL GOING TO BE BUSY PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURES.

IT MIGHT BE SOME-THING...

...WE ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO DO RIGHT NOW.

...TO BECOME A PILLAR THAT WILL PUSH YOU FORWARD.

...THAT YOU'VE GATHERED R.GHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW..

AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS. I WANT THE FEELINGS AND MEMORIES...

YOU'LL DEFINITELY REMEMBER THIS TIME AT LEAST ONCE.

ONCE YOU'VE GROWN UP TO BECOME ADULTS.

NOBODY KNOWS...

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN FROM NOW ON...

...OR HOW THE FUTURE WILL UNFOLD, BUT...

...WHEN I...

EVEN IF THERE COMES A TIME...

すらん SLUMP

I'M FINE. TOTALLY FINE.

HAHA...

A-ARE YOU OKAY?!

We spun around like crazy, huh?

...THINK BACK TO THIS DAY...

MAN, THIS IS SO MUCH FUN!

HA HA HA

SURELY,
I WILL...

...FEEL NOTHING BUT JOY AND HAPPINESS.

Hey, hey!

WHAT SHOULD WE CHECK OUT NEXT?! TAKE IT AWAY, RINTARO!

L-LET ME CATCH MY BREATH FIRST!

SOME ONE'S QUICK TO GET BACK UP ON THEIR FEET!

HA HA HA

MAN, I'M STAR-VING!

GROOOWL

DIDN'T WE LITERALLY JUST EAT CHICKEN TOGETHER?!

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS!

SOMEONE'S GOTTA SECURE A TABLE FOR US!

WHAT SHOULD WE DO ABOUT GETTING SEATS?

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME!

BUT DON'T YOU WANNA EAT SOME-THING A BIT MEATIER?

THEN IT'S CLEAR WHAT WE MUST DO...!

I... GUESS SO, YEAH. AND IT IS TIME FOR LUNCH, TOO.

WE'RE LEAVING THIS TO YOU GUYS!

ALL RIGHT!

MAKE SURE TO GET US THAT TABLE!

AND LET US KNOW ONCE YOU'VE GOT ONE!

...RIGHT.

YEAH?

YOU KNOW ...

...YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN.

PAP

THAT WAS... RATHER ANTICLI-MACTIC.

I DON'T WANNA HEAR THAT FROM THE PERSON WHO LOST TOGETHER WITH ME...

YOU'RE STILL UTTERLY HOPELESS WHEN IT COMES TO ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS, NATSUSA-WA-KUN.

NI...

SMIRK

YOU'RE EVEN CALLING IT A MIRACLE YOURSELF AT THIS POINT...

チラッ LOOK

チラッ LOOK

AND JUST TO LET YOU KNOW, WHEN WE DECIDED THE SEATS ON OUR FLIGHTS RIGHT BEFORE OUR SCHOOL TRIP...

I MIRACU-LOUSLY WON FOR ONCE.

YOU THINK SO?

YOU KNOW, YOU'RE BEING A LOT MORE OPEN ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL, HOSHINA-SAN...

MISSION COMPLETE!

OH LOOK, A TABLE JUST OPENED UP OVER THERE.

THEN LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MOMENT.

PHEW ...

Both my feet and ears have started to hurt, too...

SINCE WE ACTUALLY GOT TO SIT DOWN NOW... MAYBE LOSING WASN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL.

ARE YOU EXHAUST-ED?

HUH? WELL...

MY FEET ARE A BIT, I GUESS...

BUT I AM HAVING FUN. I'M NOT HOLDING MY-SELF BACK OR ANYTHING.

I FEEL LIKE YOU SAID THAT KNOWING WHAT I'D BE THINKING...

OF COURSE, I KNOW HOW YOU GUYS ALWAYS WORRY ABOUT ME, AFTER ALL.

WELL, IF YOU SAY SO...

I'm going to let them know that we found a table, yeah?

Oh.

Sure please do

And I have to send everyone the pictures I took...

IT'S RIGHT NOW.

GOTCHA!

I, I'M NOT REALLY FEELING LIKE IT RIGHT NOW, BUT THANKS!

THAT I WANT TO BECOME FRIENDS WITH ALL OF YOU...

AH...

NO. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME

ALL YOU'VE BEEN DOING IS TAKING PICTURES, RIGHT?

ISN'T IT A BIT OF A WASTE TO NOT TRY OUT SOMETHING AFTER COMING HERE?

HUH?

IS THERE A GAME YOU WANNA CHECK OUT, HOSHINA-SAN?

...SINCE I COULD HAVE FUN THIS MUCH WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT MY CAREER AND FUTURE.

HONESTLY, IT'S BEEN QUITE SOME TIME...

ARE YOU... PLANNING TO ATTEND UNIVERSITY?

WELL... IF I FEEL LIKE IT.

THAT'S VERY TRUE...

RUSTLE

LEAN

CAREER, HUH? HONESTLY, THAT WORD'S JUST BEEN FOLLOWING ME AROUND WHEREVER I GO LATELY.

...EVER FINDING SOMETHING I REALLY WANT TO DO IN THE FUTURE.

I DON'T SEE MYSELF...

OH?

THE OTHER GUYS HAVE BEEN TELLING ME HALF-JOKINGLY TO GO TO T-UNIVERSITY, BUT...

NOT REALLY...

WHAT ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY YOU'VE GOT IN MIND? ANYTHING?

SAY WHAT?

I WAS PLANNING ON TAKING THE ENTRANCE EXAMS THERE, TOO, AS MY FIRST CHOICE.

ALSO, IF YOU'RE GOING TO T-UNIVER-SITY...

I MEAN, I HAVEN'T DECIDED YET...

I DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYBODY ELSE WHO'S THINKING OF ENROLLING THERE.

WOW, THAT... MAKES ME REALLY HAPPY.

WELL, I CAN IMAGINE JUST WHAT'S GOING THROUGH YOUR MIND RIGHT NOW.

BUT THE TRUTH IS...

...YOU SUCK AT EXPLAINING STUFF.

Ha...

GASP

WAIT...

I WAS THINKING MAYBE YOU COULD TEACH ME BEFORE THA—

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT! THERE ARE SAME-DAY MOCK EXAMS FOR T-UNIVERSITY NEXT MONTH.

HOSHINA-SAN!

...!

...

I messed up

WHEN DO YOU HAVE TIME?

Maybe on the weekend?

WHAT...?

...DID SORTA ANNOY ME JUST A BIT.

I think t's just that...

...you suck at explaining stuff

I MEAN, HAVING THEM SAY ALL THEY WANT AND MAKE FUN OF ME...

AND TO BE HONEST...

I'VE BEEN STUDYING UP ON IT MYSELF SINCE THEN.

UM, WELL...

He seemed pretty frustrated

I HIGHLY DOUBT IT WAS JUST "SORTA" ANNOYING HIM...

SO...

MIND GIVING ME ANOTHER CHANCE TO TEST MYSELF?

...

LET'S MEET UP SOME TIME...

AND STUDY TOGETHER.

OH, FOUND YOU GUYS!

I... I'D BE GRATEFUL FOR THAT, SO...

YOU CAN START EATING WITHOUT US OR YOUR FOOD WILL GET COLD.

THEY'VE GOT A BUNCH OF DELICIOUS FOOD.

SORRY FOR THE WAIT, YOU TWO!

YOU DON'T.. WELL, WHAT-EVER.

WE SHALL WAIT AS LONG AS WE CAN!

TRUIT

HERE YOU GO! LET'S SWITCH!

SO...MIND GIVING ME ANOTHER CHANCE TO TEST MYSELF?

I'VE BEEN STUDYING UP ON IT MYSELF SINCE THEN.

...

ON TEACHING OTHERS?

HE STUDIED UP...

Oh, that one looks great.

WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

TODAY'S
MAIN DISH
AWAITS!

...

GIVES IN TO THE CRAVING OF WATCHING SOMETHING SCARY, ONLY TO REGRET IT LATER

CAN'T HANDLE HORROR AT ALL.

DOESN'T UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE WOULD ENJOY WATCHING ANYTHING RELATED TO HORROR.

Chapter 107: Rintaro's Birthday

LIKES HORROR BUT JUMPSCARES STILL GET HIM.

SCARED TO DEATH BY ANYTHING HORROR.

CAN WATCH IT AS LONG AS IT'S NOT ANYTHING SPLATTER.

TOTALLY FINE WITH ANYTHING.

HAS NO ISSUES WITH MOST OF THE GENRE, BUT GHOSTS DOING THE SCARING ISN'T HIS FORTE.

WELL, YOU SAID DURING THE TRAIN RIDE THAT YOU DEFINITELY WANT TO CHECK OUT THIS PLACE, RIGHT RINTARO?

YUP!

FOR REAL?! I DON'T THINK I CAN HANDLE THIS!

I HEARD THEY MADE IT EVEN SCARIER AFTER THE RENEWAL!

SHE HASN'T SAID A WORD FOR A HOT MINUTE NOW...

And that's rare.

AND LOOK AT YOUR GIRL-FRIEND, TOO.

FOR ONCE, YOU TWO ARE POLAR OPPO-SITES...

EXCITED

EXCITED

HUH? REALLY?

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER SEEN YOU MAKE THAT KIND OF EAGER EXPRESSION BEFORE.

THEN JUST HAVE YOUR BOYFRIEND PROTECT YOU!

DON'T SAY THAT WITH SUCH A BIG GRIN ON YOUR FACE...

Y-YEAH! WE'RE NOT ALONE!

I TOTALLY GET YOU, WAGURI-SAN! THIS KIND OF SCARY THING ISN'T FUN AT ALL!

AH, RIGHT. I MEAN, I ALREADY TOLD YOU BACK THEN, DIDN'T I?

I REMEMBER HIM BEING PRETTY SCARED WHILE WALKING THROUGH A HAUNTED HOUSE DURING OUR FIRST YEAR'S CULTURAL FESTIVAL.

IS THAT TRUE?

OH YEAH, THAT DID HAPPEN.

HUH?

ALSO, I THOUGHT YOU AREN'T GOOD WITH THIS KIND OF HORROR STUFF, AYATO.

AND EVEN WHEN I ASKED THE GUYS WHO MANAGED THE HAUNTED HOUSE, I COULDN'T FIND THE PERSON WHO DID IT...

NATURALLY I'D BE SCARED IF THAT HAPPENED, RIGHT?

SOMEONE TOUCHED MY LEG EVEN THOUGH DIRECT CONTACT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A NO-GO.

SHIVER

Oh dear

Wow, that really happened?!

HA HA HA.

IS THAT... ACTUALLY TRUE?

AT LEAST THEY'RE HAVING FUN...

Ha ha ha!

LET'S GO, LET'S GO! NO DAW-DLING!

MY BAD...

STUPID NATSU-SAWA-KUN!

DANGIT, I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED...

WAIT, NOW?!

THE NEXT GROUP, PLEASE.

I... I'M FINE, REALLY...

SOMEHOW, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT NOT SKIPPING OUT ON THIS ONE?

SHE ACTUALLY LOOKS TERRIFIED

...AND I DECIDED TO NOT CHICKEN OUT!

BUT WE'RE HERE FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY...

HEY, GIVE ME YOUR HAND

HUH?

Y-
YEAH...

DOES THAT HELP A BIT?

I HEARD THE SECOND HALF OF THIS RIDE IS WHERE IT GETS REALLY SCARY... IS SHE GONNA MAKE IT THROUGH THIS?
THAT'S COMING FROM THE SPEAKER BEHIND US.
EEEK!
WE HUMBLY WELCOME YOU..

No no, no
NOW I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT SHE'S LIKE WHEN SCARED...
!
BAD W.TH HORROR?
OH YEAH, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...

...
ITCH
BOO!
!!!
SORRY, SORRY.
CHUCKLE
GRRR
...!!!
I won't do it again!
...!
CURSE THESE FEELINGS OF MINE...
I can't be mad at him.
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT LEAST!
BUT YOU'RE STILL MAD AT ME, YEAH?
...MAYBE A BIT!
BUT...
I DO REALLY FEEL THAT WAY.
?

SEEING YOU LAUGH AND HAVE FUN...

...IS ALL I NEED.

YEAH...

I REALLY DON'T WANT...

THIS TIME TO END...

WHAT ...

WHAT'S WRONG?

F- FOR...

!

WAAAAH!!!

FOR A WHILE NOW...

AND WHEN I THINK ABOUT WHAT AWAITS ME FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, I JUST...

NOOO!

THE SCREAMS OF THE PEOPLE IN FRONT OF US HAVE BEEN GETTING LOUDER AND LOUDER...

I MEAN...

Say something please

RIN-TARO-KUN...?

...

ISN'T THAT THE BEST THING ABOUT HORROR?

WAA-AAAA-AAA-AAH?!

GRWOOO

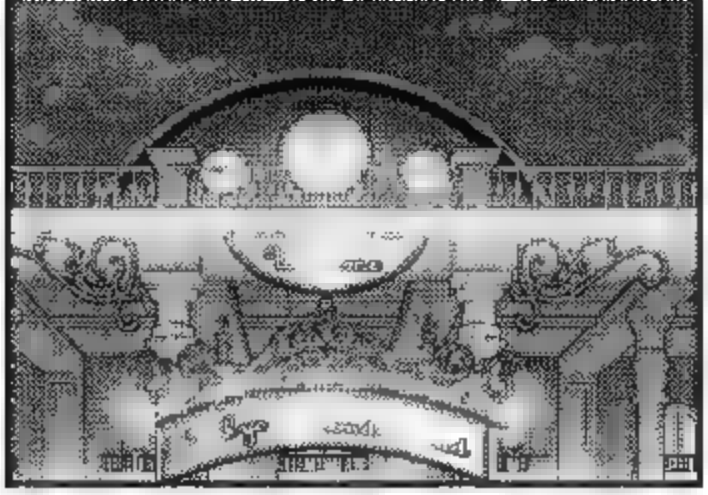
NO! I CAN'T! LET ME OUT!

HAHA, YOU SCREAM WAY TOO MUCH!

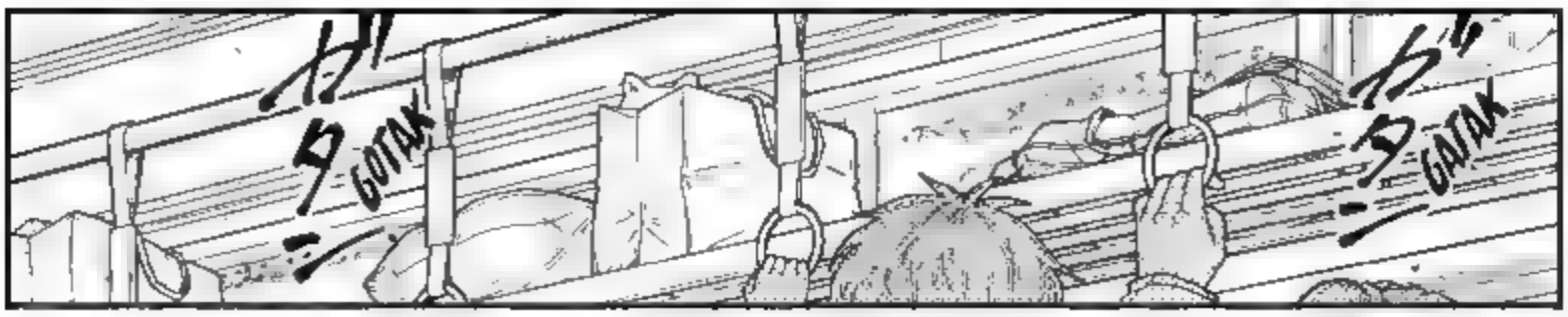
WAAAAAAH!

WASN'T THAT JUST USAMI-KUN

NO-OOO-OOO!



We're alive!

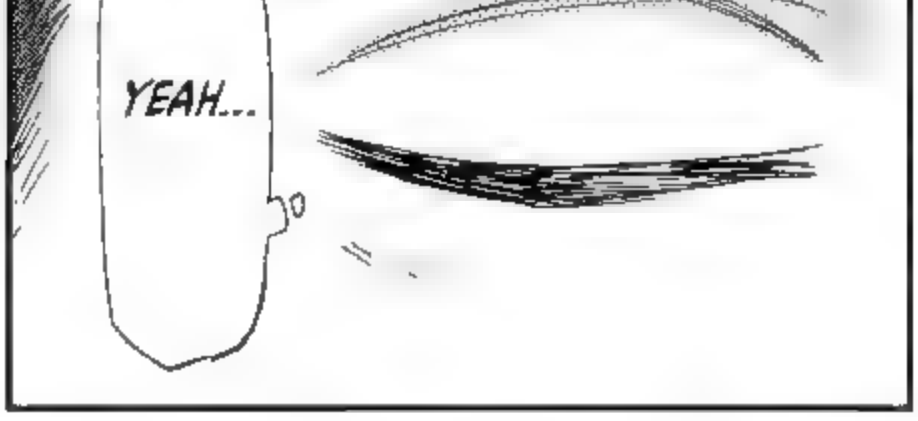

GOTAK
GOTAK

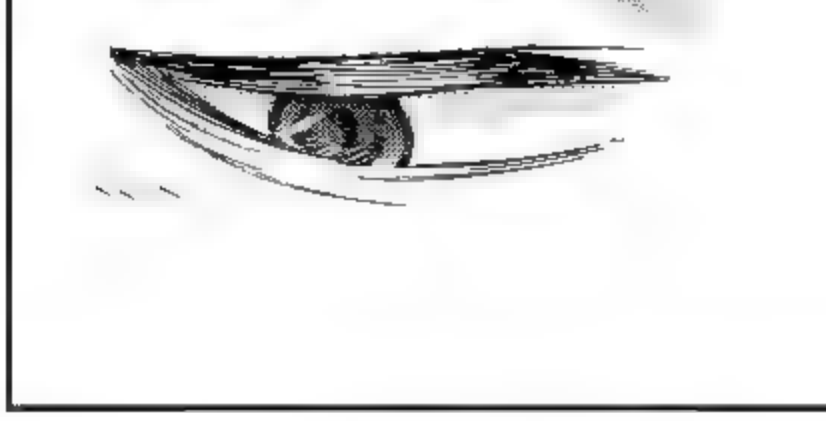
GOTAK
GOTAK

GOTAK
GOTAK

ALTHOUGH WE ALL ENDED UP SCATTERED...
Ten more minutes until we gotta switch trains
GOTAK
FEELS NOTHING SHORT OF A MIRACLE THAT WE GOT SEATS...
GOTAK

ナイ…
ナイ…


YEAH...



TODAY WAS A BLAST...

EVERYONE SLEPT LIKE A BABY, HAHA!

I'M GLAD WE GOT TO SIT DURING THE TRAIN RIDE.

WE'RE BACK!

WE FIGURED IT'D ALL BE TOO MUCH BAGGAGE IF WE GAVE THEM TO YOU TODAY.

TSUMUGI-KUN, WE'LL JUST GIVE KAORUKO OUR PRESENTS FOR YOU, OKAY?

ALL RIGHT, WE GOTTA GO THIS WAY.

TH-THANKS, I APPRE-CIATE IT.

YOU BETTER LOOK FORWARD TO IT!

USAMI-KUN LOOKS LIKE HE'D FALL ASLEEP ANY SECOND!

SEE YOU GUYS AROUND!

YOU GUYS...

...

THANKS SO MUCH...

...FOR TODAY, REALLY.

WE HAD PLENTY OF FUN OURSELVES!
YOU'RE WEL-COME.

BYE-BYE!
YEAH! BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY HOME, YOU GUYS!
OH, OUR TRAIN'S GONNA BE HERE ANY MINUTE! WE GOTTA GO.
Bye! See you guys!

...!

ALMOST FORGOT...

DANG, MY FEET ARE KILLING ME...

They're completely red.

TSUSAWA 夏沢

TAP TAP

PLING

!

SO MANY NEW MEMO-RIES...

Natsusawa
Sorry to text you this late.
You still up?

LET'S MEET UP SOME TIME ..

AND STUDY TOGETHER.

SO...

MIND GIVING ME ANOTHER CHANCE TO TEST MYSELF?

THIS MUST BE IN REGARD TO WHAT WE DISCUSSED EARLIER TODAY, RIGHT?

NATSU-SAWA-KUN...?

I'm awake.

Oh, I figured you'd be asleep by now. You must be tired, right?

I was looking at the photos we took today, so I feel wide awake again.

Gotcha.

Today sure was fun, huh?

That was.

...I GUESS I SHOULD'VE CALLED HER INSTEAD. I REMEMBER HER NOT BEING ALL THAT GREAT AT TEXTING ON HER PHONE.

I'VE REALLY GOTTEN FASTER AT TYPING MESSAGES COMPARED TO BEFORE...

Anyway, about the study session we talked about earlier today, when would be a good day for you?

I'll just keep my schedule open then.

SHUPUP

THAT WENT... SMOOTH.

Next Saturday would work for me.

Gotcha. We can chat aga n for the exact time another day.

It's pretty .ate, after all.

That works for me. Thank you.

Good night.

All right, good night.

CHAK カチ

WE'VE HUNG OUT...

COUNTLESS TIMES ALREADY, BUT...

PWOOF ポフン

BUT THIS ACTUALLY MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TIME...

WE TALKED TO EACH OTHER AS JUST THE TWO OF US LIKE THAT.

NEXT

I LOVE SEEING HIM LIKE THIS.

WITH HIS MOUTH OPEN WHILE HE SMILES.

AND HIS EYEBROWS LOW.*

*I have no idea what they meant by this...

WHEN HE WAS INSATISFIED OR EMBARRASSED

IT ALSO MADE ME HAPPY TO SEE HIM SQUINT HIS EYES SLIGHTLY

I ALSO LOVE HOW HE SHOWS HIS TEETH WHEN HE SMIRKS.

Kakioroshi

SPECIAL CHAPTER 107.5: RETURNING HOME FROM RINTARO'S BIRTHDAY

Omake

I WANT TO SEE MORE OF YOUR EXPRESSIONS, RINTARO-KUN

FROM NOW ON, AS I STAND BY YOUR SIDE.

AND...
WHILE I WAS THINKING THAT...
...
I DIDN'T THINK I'D SEE HIS SLEEPING FACE NOW.
WOKE UP FIRST
HE LOOKS SO CUTE...

UP CLOSE...

WELL, I DON'T HAVE MANY CHANCES OF SEEING HIS FACE UP CLOSE...

NOW THAT I SEE HIM UP CLOSE, HIS EYELASHES ARE REALLY LONG

I NEVER NOTICED...

I REMEM-BERED NOW...

すー...

MY LEFT SHOULDER IS HEATING UP...

MAYBE THIS WILL TURN INTO A GOOD MEMORY?

I'M SURE IT WILL

HE HAD A LOT OF FUN TODAY...

AS I THOUGHT, IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO BRING EVERYONE.

!
.....
CONTROL YOURSELF, KAORUKO...
THERE'S MANY PEOPLE AROUND...
Lots of passengers at these hours
BUT...

MAYBE WE COULD'VE KISSED...

HAD WE BEEN ALONE...

...

NEXT STOP IS...

SUCH A SHAME...

Kakioroshi

BONUS ILLUSTRATION

Omake

ガチャ
KCHAK
I'M HOME!
WOOF
WOOF
ACK...
HUH? ARE YOU GOING SOME-WHERE?
...YEAH.
TO DO WHAT?
JUST STUDY-ING.
WHO ARE YOU MEETING? USAMI-SAN AND THE OTHERS?
...YEAH, PRETTY MUCH.
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
Take care!
Woof!
WHERE THE HELL DID YOU EVEN GET TO MEET...
...THOSE TWO CUTIES, HUH?!
...

Chapter 108: Saku and Subaru's Study Session

HOSHINA-SAN JUST TEXTED ME.

Said she'd be waiting over here, right?

Central Gate

...WAS WHEN WE WERE ALL IN ONE BIG GROUP.

HONESTLY, THE ONLY TIMES I HUNG OUT WITH HOSHINA-SAN...

IT DOES MAKE ME FEEL A BIT RESTLESS.

JUST THE TWO OF US...

MEETING TOGE-THER LIKE THIS...

And that silver hair...

COULD SHE BE A CELE-BRITY?

Oh my!

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL!

CHECK OUT THAT GIRL OVER THERE!

MURMUR

MURMUR

OH WELL, WE'RE JUST GONNA STUDY TOGETHER, NOTHING MORE.

SHE REALLY DOES STAND OUT A LOT.

Makes me wonder if we're even the same age

WELL, THAT'S NOTHING NEW, I GUESS.

I'M JUST USED TO SEEING HER, AND WHENEVER RINTARO WAS WITH US BACK WHEN HE HAD HIS BLOND HAIR, THE ATTENTION THEY GOT WAS USUALLY SPLIT BETWEEN THEM.

THEN AGAIN, SHE ALWAYS GETS ATTENTION NO MATTER WHERE SHE GOES.

Wanna try talking to him?

A real hottie

Look! Isn't that guy so cool?

IT'S LIKE SHE'S PART OF A DIFFERENT WORLD ALTOGE-THER...

DID I MAKE HER WAIT TOO LONG? BUT I'M HERE EARLY, TOO...

GLOOM

THAT SAID... IS IT JUST ME, OR DOES SHE SEEM A BIT ANGRY?

!

HOSHINA-SAN!

CRAP ...!

I totally dig flashy girls like her

YO, ARE YOU GONNA DO IT? SHOOT YOUR SHOT?

PHEW
ほっ…
NATSU-SAWA-KUN!
SORRY FOR MAKING YOU WAIT.
OH, DON'T BE. I JUST GOT HERE EARLY.
たた…
SHE SEEMS... RELIE-VED...?
YEAH?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ANGRY WITH ME BECAUSE YOU'D BEEN STANDING HERE FOR SO LONG.
WHAT?! WH-WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT?
I DON'T KNOW, I JUST GOT THAT VIBE FROM YOU...
I... I WOULDN'T GET ANGRY JUST BECAUSE OF THAT!
THOUGH... SOMETIMES MY FRIENDS ALSO ASK ME IF I'M ANGRY ABOUT SOMETHING.
WELL, WHAT HAD YOU MAKING THAT FACE THEN?

SHE NEVER CHANGES, HUH?

Yeah.

Off we go, then?

Hmmm...

I WAS JUST THINKING THAT THERE ARE MANY THINGS I SHOULD STUDY UP ON TODAY.

I'LL... DO MY BEST.

WELCOME!

OH WOW, YOU'VE GOT IT ROUGH, HUH?

YES. THE MOCK EXAM AND REGULAR EXAMS ARE RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER, SEE...

OH, IF IT ISN'T HOSHINA-SAN.

HERE TO STUDY AGAIN?

WILL YOU BE SITTING AT YOUR REGULAR SEAT?

THEY SEEM TO KNOW HER QUITE WELL...

ACTUAL-LY...

WHAT?

TURN

WOULD YOU BE OKAY WITH THAT?

WHICH SEAT...?

W-WELL...

RIGHT.

W-WAIT, HE'S WITH YOU?!

OH GOSH, I'M SO SORRY! I HAD NO IDEA!

AND HE'S HAND-SOME...!

I USUALLY SIT AT THE COUNTER OVER THERE WHENEVER I STUDY.

I MEAN, IF YOU DON'T MIND...

AND SHE'S FINE WITH THAT...?

I'M FINE WITH IT.

I'M SO SORRY, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY OPEN TABLES RIGHT NOW...

THAT LOOKS... PRETTY CRAMPED...

WELL ...

I GUESS IT'S SETTLED THEN.

?

YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN THINKING...

YOU REALLY KNOW ALL SORTS OF PLACES, HOSHINA-SAN.

Yeah, this is some-thing...

Waaah!

Manager! Hoshina-san brought a boy with her! I can't believe it!

I OFTEN COME HERE TO STUDY WHEN I CAN'T QUITE FOCUS AT HOME.

OH, I AGREE.

IT'S GREAT HERE. I LOVE THE RELAXING ATMO-SPHERE.

DO I?

I THINK IT'S MORE THAT THE PEOPLE AROUND ME ARE ALL SUCH NICE PEOPLE THAT I CAN TALK TO THEM WITH EASE.

BUT YOU DO SEEM PRETTY SOCIABLE AFTER ALL.

HONESTLY, I NEVER GOT THAT FEELING FROM YOU...

AND AFTER COMING HERE REGULARLY, I'VE GOTTEN ACQUAINTED WITH THE EMPLOYEES HERE, TOO.

THAT IS ALSO VERY TRUE.

THOSE TWO ARE IN THEIR OWN LEAGUE, SO YOU SHOULDN'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO THEM.

Masters at communication!

OF COURSE, I CAN'T HOPE TO COMPARE TO USAMI-KUN OR MADOKA.

MORE IMPORTANTLY...

THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE I WANT TO AVOID AT ANY COST.

AFTER ALL...

!

LEAN

LET'S GET STARTED, SHALL WE?

AH...

YEAH.

SOUNDS GOOD.

Let's do that.

As I mentioned earlier, of course!

THERE'S A WHOLE PILE OF QUESTIONS I HAVE REGARDING THE MATERIAL.

WHAT...?!

TRY SOLVING THAT QUESTION.

RIGHT NOW.

Actually...

HOLD ON A SECOND.

FIRST, I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU STARTED TEACHING ME FROM HERE...

...

...AND WHERE YOU STRUGGLE.

I'll be watching.

I'D LIKE TO SEE...

...HOW YOU TRY TO SOLVE IT...

SCRIBBLE

SCRIBBLE

SCRIBBLE

...
RIGHT HERE.
SCRIBBLE
...
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
ALL RIGHT.
I THINK I GOT IT.
...
EVEN WHEN I LOOK AT THE SOLUTION, I CAN'T SEEM TO GRASP IT.
I ALWAYS GET STUCK AT THIS PART.
YOU JUST HAVE TO...
PUSH
GASP
I MEAN, WHEN I SIT TO YOUR RIGHT, I'LL HAVE TO GET CLOSE TO TEACH YOU... AND I THOUGHT YOU MAYBE DON'T LIKE THAT?
...WHAT?
YOU KNOW... MAYBE WE SHOULD SWITCH SEATS?
SWIP
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S HAS A FEAR OF MEN!
CRAP, I WAS STILL IN THE MIND-SET THAT I WAS TEACHING SHOHEI AND THE OTHERS!

IF YOU SAY SO...

OH ...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

... NO, I'M PERFECTLY FINE WITH THAT.

WHERE WAS I?

THEN...

I SEE... ---

SCRIBBLE SCRIBBLE

YEAH? THAT'S GOOD.

SO THIS IS HOW I SOLVE IT!

THAT MAKES SO MUCH MORE SENSE!

SAY, NATSU-SAWA-KUN?

HE SEEMS HAPPY...

YOUR STYLE OF TEACHING HAS ALSO CHANGED COMPLETELY FROM LAST TIME...

THERE SHOULD ONLY BE ONE WAY OF SOLVING THAT FORMULA.

WHY DID YOU ASK ME FOR ANOTHER CHANCE TO TEST YOURSELF?

HUH?

YOU SAID YOU WERE LOOKING INTO IT YOURSELF...

BUT WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU DO?

I'VE BEEN STUDYING UP ON IT MYSELF SINCE THEN

AND TO BE HONEST...

NOTHING MUCH, REALLY.

FWIP

...

I JUST THOUGHT TO STOP...

TEACHING THE OTHER PERSON EVERYTHING ONE-SIDEDLY.

ONE-SIDED-LY?

WELL... I GUESS IT DID FEEL LIKE THAT BACK THEN...

SHE REALLY STOPPED HOLDING BACK WHEN SHE'S GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, EH?

WHEN WE ALL STUDIED TOGETHER AT THE FAMILY RESTAURANT, YOU TAUGHT SHOHEI AND THE OTHER GUYS, REMEMBER?

Here, you just do this to then...

Oooh! I think I got it!

YOU AND WAGURI-SAN, I MEAN.

IT MADE ME REA-LIZE...

...THAT JUST ONE CHANGE IN CONVEYING INFOR-MATION...

CAN HAVE SUCH A HUGE DIFFERENCE AND IMPACT ON THE OTHER PERSON'S UNDER-STANDING.

WE'VE GOT A LOT OF TALENTED TEACHERS, Y'KNOW.

I STARTED TO OBSERVE HOW OUR TEACHERS WOULD TEACH US STUDENTS DURING CLASS.

AND FROM THAT POINT ON...

AND HOW I WAS TEACHING THE OTHER GUYS.

I BEGAN TO LOOK FOR THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUR AND THEIR WAYS OF TEACHING

I COULD TELL THAT I WAS GETTING BETTER MYSELF

SLOWLY BUT SURELY...

Usami of all people?!

Wow!

THOSE STRATEGIES I WOULD THEN TEST ON RINTARO AND THE GUYS WHENEVER THEY'D ASK ME FOR HELP.

YEAH.

!

AND DID YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT THE BIG DIFFERENCE WAS?

IT'S IMPORTANT TO TEACH SOMEONE...

I'D LIKE TO SEE...

...HOW YOU TRY TO SOLVE IT...

...AND WHERE YOU STRUG-GLE.

I'll be watching

...WHILE LOOKING AT IT FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW.

...

WHAT ?

TRY SOLVING THAT QUESTION RIGHT NOW.

I MEAN...

IF PEOPLE COME AND ASK ME...

TO TEACH THEM, YOU KNOW...

WHAT'S THE POINT OF DOING THAT...

...IF THEY DON'T GET IT IN THE END, RIGHT?

H-HONESTLY, IT'S SO OBVIOUS I FEEL EMBAR-RASSED JUST SAYING THIS, SO...

MIND KEEPING THIS A SECRET FROM SHOHEI AND THE OTHERS?

HEY, NATSU-SAWA-KUN.

YEAH?

SO, WHAT ELSE DID YOU HAVE PRO-BLEMS WITH?

NO, SERIOUS-LY...

WOULDN'T THEY BE HAPPY?

...FOR TELLING ME.

THANK YOU...

...NO PROB-LEM.

...

WHICH PART IS SHE TALKING ABOUT?

OF COURSE

ANYWAY, LET'S CONTINUE.

ROLL

NGHHH...

I'M OUT OF ENERGY...

THE FACT THAT YOUR REACTION IS THIS NONCHALANT SPEAKS VOLUMES, TOO.

Yeah.

THANKS FOR LETTING ME BORROW IT. STILL, T-UNIVERSITY SURE IS A STEP ABOVE WHAT I'M USED TO.

AND YOU'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE WORK-BOOK ALL THIS TIME, TOO.

SOUNDS GOOD. MY HEAD NEEDS A BREATHER.

WHAT DO YOU SAY WE TAKE A QUICK BREAK? WE COULD ORDER A BITE.

CHEERY

HER EYES ARE BEAMING...

THE COFFEE AND FOOD HERE ARE QUITE TASTY, YOU KNOW?

CHEERY

CURRENTLY ORDERING...

Could I have this... and this, please?

Of course!

YES?

SO, HOSHINA-SAN...

...

?

NOT AT ALL.

MIND IF I ASK?

THERE'S ONE THING I'M CURIOUS ABOUT...

WHY IS IT...

T-University

English Vocabulary

...A CO-ED UNIVERSITY?

...THAT YOU CHOSE...

I WAS PLANNING ON TAKING THE ENTRANCE EXAMS THERE, TOO, AS MY FIRST CHOICE.

SAY WHAT?

I MEAN, I HAVEN'T DECIDED YET...

I DON'T REALLY KNOW ANYBODY ELSE WHO'S THINKING OF ENROLLING THERE.

WOW, THAT... MAKES ME REALLY HAPPY.

WHY IS IT...

IF YOU'RE GOING TO T-UNIVERSITY...

ALSO,

...A CO-ED UNIVERSITY?

...THAT YOU CHOSE...

Chapter 109: The Courage to Move Forward

WELL...

I MEAN...

...

WHAT?

I'M SURE YOU CHOSE IT PURPOSE-FULLY TO FULFILL YOUR DREAM...

...OF BE-COMING A LAW-YER AND ALL...

IT'S JUST...

Y' KNOW...

I WAS PRETTY SURE...

...YOU'D CHOOSE A WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY...

...

YOU'D PROBABLY BE CONFRONTED WITH MEN QUITE A LOT AT A CO-ED UNIVERSITY.

THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE I WANT TO AVOID AT ANY COST.

AFTER ALL...

THERE ARE PEOPLE YOU'D RATHER NOT RUN INTO...

AND YOU JUST SAID...

I CROSSED A LINE, DIDN'T I?

...

WELL, IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL ME, THAT'S FINE...

I DON'T KNOW.

I WAS JUST CURI-OUS...

I KNOW I SHOULD JUST BE MINDING MY OWN BUSINESS, BUT...

YOU'RE... INCREDIBLY CONSIDERATE, AREN'T YOU?

I-I DON'T...

...?!

...WORRIED ABOUT ME, RIGHT?

YOU MUST BE...

YOUR ORDER IS READY!

I'M REALLY NOT...

?

Thank you very much.

... YEAH.

LET'S EAT.

I totally interrupted them just now, didn't I...?!

...WORRIED ABOUT YOU.

WELL, I AM...

THAT MUCH SHOULD BE A GIVEN.

WE'RE FRIENDS, RIGHT?

...THE CANDIDATE FOR MY FIRST CHOICE WAS A WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY.

AND YOU'RE RIGHT.

RIGHT UP UNTIL THE END OF LAST YEAR...

...THAT IS TRUE.

...HASN'T JUST MAGICALLY VANISHED OR ANYTHING.

AFTER ALL, MY TROUBLE OF DEALING WITH MEN...

THE TRUTH IS... THAT I WANTED TO APPLY FOR T-UNIVERSITY.

I JUST COULDN'T FIND THE COURAGE TO DO SO.

LEAN

...

BUT...

I KNEW THAT THIS PROBLEM WOULD COME BACK EVENTUALLY...

EVEN IF I CONTINUED TO AVOID THAT ISSUE...

AND MANAGED TO BECOME A LAWYER IN THE FUTURE...

AND THAT'S WHY YOU CHOSE A CO-ED UNIVER-SITY?

TO CONQUER YOUR FEAR?

...AS A ROAD-BLOCK IN MY WAY.

OH, YOU'VE DEFINITELY GOT A POINT.

THAT IS... QUITE THE AGGRESSIVE THERAPY METHOD...

...

BECAUSE OF YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE.

BUT I MANAGED TO MAKE THIS DECISION...

...

Of course, I wasn't testing you or anything.

SUCH A... POSITIVE EXPERIENCE REALLY HELPED A LOT.

SPENDING TIME WITH YOU...

I REALIZED THAT...

THERE ARE ALSO PEOPLE LIKE YOU IN THIS WORLD.

THAT'S WHY...

...AND GIVEN ME THE COURAGE TO AIM FOR SOMETHING GREATER.

I WANT TO BE WITH YOU

...HAS ALLOWED ME TO BE MORE POSITIVE...

SO THAT I CAN GAIN MORE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND GROW FROM IT.

...AND TALK TO THEM, UNRELATED TO THEIR SEX...

ONCE I'VE ENROLLED IN UNIVERSITY...

I'D LIKE TO MEET ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE...

MIGHT PLAY OUT IN THE END.

THERE'S NO TELLING HOW THIS CHALLENGE...

OF COURSE ...

BUT IF I DON'T TAKE THE LEAP NOW...

...COME TO REGRET IT IN THE FUTURE.

...I WILL SURELY...

Y-
YOU'RE
RIGHT.

BUT BEFORE
THAT, I HAVE
TO GET
ACCEPTED
INTO T-UNI-
VERSITY.

THAT
SURE-
PRISED
ME.

...I
COULDN'T
TAKE MY
EYES OFF
HER.

FOR
JUST A
MO-
MENT.

HOW MUCH SHE'S CHANGED COMPARED TO HOW SHE WAS BEFORE.

IT'S EASY TO SEE...

I'LL JUST GET THE SAME AS THE REST OF YOU.

ALL OF IT LOOKS DELICIOUS.

...REALLY PAID ATTEN-TION TO IT BEFORE, BUT...

I NEV-ER...

SHE IS...

...SOMEONE WHO CAN ALWAYS WORK TOWARD BECOMING BETTER.

THAT STRENGTH ALONE...

...IS WORTHY OF ADMIRA-TION.

I FEEL A LOT BETTER NOW.

PHEW

OH YEAH, YOU MENTIONED THAT BEFORE...

I WAS THINKING MAYBE YOU COULD TEACH ME BEFORE THA—

WAIT

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THERE ARE SAME-DAY MOCK EXAMS FOR T-UNIVERSITY NEXT MONTH

HOSHINA-SAN!

I HAVE TO GO OVER EVERYTHING ONCE I GET BACK HOME... NEXT MONTH IS THE SAME-DAY MOCK EXAM AFTER ALL.

YEAH? THAT'S GOOD.

I MANAGED TO GET A BETTER GRASP ON A LOT OF THINGS I FELT UNSURE ABOUT.

I WON'T LET IT GO TO WASTE.

THANK YOU... FOR TODAY.

I APPRECIATE YOU MAKING TIME FOR ME.

...

ANYWAY, I HAVE TO GO THIS WAY...

SEE YOU.
...
...
ACTUAL-LY...
MAY-BE...
...I SHOULD ALSO HAVE A GO AT IT.
THE MOCK EXAM, I MEAN.
...
...WHAT BROUGHT THIS UP?
WELL...
IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE DECIDED TO MAKE IT MY FIRST CHOICE OR ANY-THING.
...
IT'S JUST...

I FIG-URED...

...I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SEE WHERE I STAND.

MUMBLE MUMBLE...

ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW IF I'M GOING WITH IT FOR MY FIRST CHOICE!

YES, YOU ALREADY SAID SO.

...

I HAD INTENDED ON GOING THERE ALL BY MYSELF, SO...

I WAS FEEL-ING...

A BIT ANXIOUS ABOUT IT.

BUT...

THAT MAKES ME HAPPY.

!

...WE HEAD THERE TOGETHER ON THE DAY OF THE EXAM?

THEN WHAT DO YOU SAY...

HAVING YOU WITH ME...

...WOULD BE VERY REASSURING.

RE-ASSU-RING...

...SHE SAYS.

...WAY TOO MUCH.

SHE REALLY TRUSTS ME...

SE-RIOUS-LY?

SHE PROBABLY FEELS THIS WAY ABOUT THE OTHER GUYS, TOO.

THOUGH...

...WHEN-EVER WE HANG OUT.

I THINK I'VE GOTTEN USED TO...

INTERACTING WITH THEM AND HOW THEY BEHAVE...

FOR SOME REA-SON...

BUT...

AT THAT MO-MENT...

MY HEART WAS...

BADUMP

PHEW——...

JUST WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT...?

WAS IT BECAUSE HE SUDDENLY GOT THAT CLOSE TO ME?

...

NEXT MONTH, WE HAVE OUR END OF THE YEAR EXAMS...

14 Valentine's Day

15

AND AFTER THAT...

VALEN-TINE'S...!